TO: Principal Investigators with Active Protocols

FROM: Dr. Belinda Blevins-Knabe, Chair
       UA Little Rock Institutional Review Board

DATE: March 16, 2020

RE: Safety Procedures for the COVID-19 Outbreak

UA Little Rock and the state of Arkansas have put in place safety procedures for the current COVID-19 outbreak. With respect to this situation investigators should consider whether at any point their research procedures should be revised to limit personal contacts, for example by reducing the frequency of in-person visits, in-person focus groups, or replacing in-person interviews/focus groups with telephone or Internet contacts. Studies which require physically touching participants for placement of monitors, etc. may also need to be revised. Whether and when this may be advisable will vary depending on your protocol and the participants with whom you are working. It is important to prioritize the safety of participants and the study team.

Should you determine that changes in your procedures are required, you may implement them immediately, without prior notice to or approval from the IRB if there is an apparent immediate hazard to participants. You will need to ensure that you are not introducing other hazards, and you may need to ask participants to sign revised informed consent forms.

If you implement a change, you must notify the IRB within 5 calendar days of that first implementation of change. Any changes should be reported on a modification form. You will be expected to indicate the change has been implemented and why it had to be done immediately, without prior approval.

If there is not an apparent immediate hazard to participants (i.e. you are not currently collecting data under hazardous conditions) and you still need to amend your protocol in any way, please submit a modification form with the proposed changes.

The IRB is making extra efforts to facilitate research under these new challenging conditions. We will continue to function, and please do not hesitate to reach out to us at irb@ualr.edu with any questions.