



Waivers and Alterations of Informed Consent/Parental Permission/Assent Children

Procedures

1. Waivers and Alterations of Documentation of Informed Consent/Parental Permission

The regulations allow the CCI to waive written informed consent for research that meets specific regulatory criteria. HHS and FDA have different regulations regarding waiver of consent. For HHS funded research the CCI may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either

- A. The only record that links the subject to the research is the consent document, and the potential harm that may result from a breach of confidentiality represents the predominant risk. Each subject will be asked his or her preference as to whether documentation that links him or her to the research is to exist. The subject's preference will prevail; or
- B. The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to a subject, and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

FDA only recognizes a waiver of informed consent documentation for category B. The investigator is required to justify in the protocol how either of these conditions are to be met, and if the CCI agrees, the minutes must document concurrence or the CCI's determination.

In cases in which the documentation requirement is waived, the CCI may require the investigator to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research. The procedure for waiving the requirement for documentation is not intended to circumvent the requirement for informed consent but rather to protect patient privacy. All required information must still be presented and discussed to ensure a voluntary informed consent process.

2. Waiver of Some or all Elements of Informed Consent

For any research that is subject to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, the CCI may approve a consent/permission procedure that does not include or that alters some or all of the elements of informed consent, or that waives the requirements to obtain informed consent. However, the FDA only provides an exception from informed consent requirements for emergency research. For research that is not subject to FDA oversight, the CCI may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters

some or all of the elements of informed consent provided the CCI determines and documents that:

1. The research or demonstration project is to be conducted by, or is subject to, the approval of state or local government officials, and is designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs; and the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; **or**
2. The research (i) involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects; (ii) the waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects; (iii) the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and (iv) whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

If an investigator seeks a waiver of informed consent, the section of the protocol application that requires a justification of the means by which the waiver criteria are met for that study must be completed. If a protocol is eligible for expedited review, the reviewer is responsible for determining that the criteria are met prior to accepting a waiver. If the CCI or expedited reviewer agrees with the determinations and findings provided by the investigator in the application form, the agreement will be documented in the CCI minutes or if through the expedited review, in the protocol record. In making a determination as to whether the research could not be practicably carried out without the waiver or alteration the committee will consider the following criteria;

- a) the size of the population being researched
- b) the proportion of individuals likely to have relocated or died since the time the personal information was originally collected or the patient was seen for clinical care
- c) the risk of introducing potential bias into the research, thereby affecting the generalizability and validity of the results
- d) the risk of creating additional threats to privacy by having to link otherwise de-identified data with nominal identifiers in order to contact individuals to seek their consent
- e) the risk of inflicting psychological, social or other harm by contacting individuals or families with particular conditions or in certain circumstances
- f) the difficulty and loss of privacy inherent in contacting individuals directly when there is no existing relationship between the organization and the individuals
- g) the difficulty of contacting individuals indirectly through public means, such as advertisements and notices
- h) Whether, in any, of the above circumstances, the requirement for additional financial, material, human, organizational and other resources needed to obtain such consent will make the conduct of the research impracticable because it is an undue hardship.

3. Waivers of Parental Permission

In accordance with DHHS regulations, the waiver of parental informed consent with reliance solely on the child/adolescent's consent is permitted in two situations. The first situation is when research meets the criteria listed which includes the research (i) involves no more than

minimal risk to the subjects; (ii) the waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects; (iii) the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and (iv) whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation. A second criteria which is not limited to minimal risk research is when it is unreasonable to obtain the parent's permission (e.g., the research involves health care issues subject to confidentiality specific to an adolescent subject). This situation is common in areas of adolescent research that involve sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, high-risk behaviors and AIDS prevention. Parental permission is to be obtained whenever reasonable. However, in situations in which the investigator considers it unreasonable, the CCI is to carefully consider the investigator's request and determine whether the waiver falls within the guidelines established by the Society of Adolescent Medicine and federal regulations. An additional waiver form is available as part of the protocol application should a waiver of parental permission be requested for this purpose. If the CCI determines that a research protocol is designed for conditions or for a subject population for which parental or guardian permission is not a reasonable requirement for protecting the subjects (e.g., neglected or abused children), it may waive the consent requirements, provided an appropriate mechanism is substituted to protect the children who will participate as subjects in the research, and provided that the waiver is not inconsistent with federal, state, or local law.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not adopted the section of the federal regulations (45 CFR 46.4089C) that allow for waiver of parental permission. Therefore, protocols that involve children that are subject to FDA regulations may not waive the requirement for obtaining parental permission under these criteria.

4. Exception from the requirement of informed consent under the emergency use of Test Article

Please refer to the policy of *Emergency Exemptions*

Document Attributes

Title	Procedure for Waiving the Requirement for Documented Informed Consent For Adults and Parental Permission for Children		
Author	Susan Kornetsky	Dates Reviewed/ Revised	04/01/07
Reviewed/ Revised by	Susan Kornetsky		04/05/07 05/18/09 03/09/10
Copyright	©Children's Hospital Boston, 2012	Last Modified	03/26/2010
Approved	Susan Kornetsky Director of Clinical Research Compliance <hr/> Carleen Brunelli, MBA, PhD Vice President for Research Administration		