



www.research.umn.edu/consent

Research Subjects' Protection Programs

Web-Based Resource Helps Researchers Create Consent Documents

One of the more time-consuming but critical tasks in preparing applications for review by the IRB: Human Subjects Committee is creating the consent document. This document not only contains the information that will be given to potential subjects but also conveys to the IRB a sense of the communication process the research team will engage in with its subjects. Consequently the consent document comes under close scrutiny by the IRB for completeness, readability, and effectiveness.

Getting it right the first time is the most efficient approach, and the Research Subjects' Protection Programs staff has developed a new resource to help researchers in this effort. This web-based resource provides instructional material and a "performance support tool" for authoring a consent document. The instructional materials include information on the evolution of informed consent, the principles integral to the process, and the essential elements to be conveyed to research participants.

When you or a member of your research team is ready to author a consent document, the performance support tool splits the computer screen in half. The document is com-

posed in the upper half, while the lower half of the screen provides immediate access to the key elements for that particular section of the document, useful examples, and even a list of everyday words to substitute for our academic jargon. When the document is completed to your satisfaction, you e-mail it to yourself. Then copy it into your word processor, run it through your usual edits for readability, and attach it to your application. You don't have to complete the document at once, and you can have multiple consent documents in development simultaneously. We'll keep them on our server, and remind you from time to time that we're holding a draft for you.

You can find this resource at <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>, or from the RSPP web site at <http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects>, select *Informed Consent Tutorial* from the IRB menu.

This is a "first cut," so if you have any suggestions to help us improve the site, either in content or function, please send them to IRB@umn.edu, or RsSchTrng@umn.edu. Happy authoring.

by Moira Keane, director, RSPP