



**Boston
Children's
Hospital**
Until every child is well

Human Subjects Protection Update Special Communication July 2017

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IRB (Institutional Review Board) Boston Children's Hospital

Boston Children's Hospital joins SMART IRB (Replacing Harvard Catalyst)

Boston Children's Hospital (BCH) has signed on to SMART IRB's master reliance agreement. SMART IRB, a national initiative funded by NCATS to streamline the single IRB review process for multi-site studies, includes a master IRB reliance agreement signed by many domestic universities, research institutions and hospitals. It also includes an online system to request use of the master reliance agreement for a specific research protocol. Smart IRB was developed and based on the Harvard Catalyst reliance request system but has now been revamped and deployed for national use. As a result, the Harvard Catalyst reliance request system will soon be decommissioned.

What does this mean for requesting reliance agreements among the Harvard sites?

As of July 31st, SMART IRB's master reliance agreement and request system will replace the Harvard Catalyst master reliance agreement and its cede request system. All institutions previously participating in the Harvard Catalyst agreement have joined SMART IRB. This means you will no longer be able to use the Harvard Catalyst reliance request system and will be redirected to SMART IRB to make any reliance requests.

What if I have an open request remaining in the Harvard Catalyst reliance system after July 31st?

For investigators with open Harvard Catalyst IRB cede requests, IRBs will have until September 29th to process the request. Please be sure to take note of the decommissioning process and timeline details [here](#), taking proper action to complete your requests prior to final shutdown on September 29th.

Will I be able to use SMART IRB for reliance requests either for BCH to be the reviewing IRB or to rely on another IRB?

Yes, BCH encourages the use of the Smart IRB master reliance agreement for multi-site research that wants to utilize a single IRB, whether BCH be the reviewing IRB or a site relying on another IRB. As long as the collaborating institutions have also signed on to the agreement, a great amount of time negotiating and establishing agreements will be reduced. We encourage its use going forward.

Will I still need to enter a reliance request in CHERP?

Yes, Smart IRB only addresses the need for a reliance agreement, if the IRBs agree to consolidate oversight. All other BCH institutional processes to track and review research protocols when an investigator requests that BCH serves as the single IRB (via an 'Add Reliance on BCH' request) or requests that we rely on another site (via a 'Reliance on Another IRB' submission) still need to be followed.

Visit the SMART IRB [website](#) for further information and list of participating institutions. For further information using a single IRB for a multi-site research protocol, see our [Reliance Agreements](#) page on the Boston Children's Hospital IRB website or contact IRB Specialist Daniel Alderson at daniel.alderson@childrens.harvard.edu or 617- 919-1918.