Subject: Procedure for Maintaining Quorum Required for IRB Committee Review

Procedure:
This procedure provides guidance on the maintenance of quorum that must occur when the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committees review and approve research under its jurisdiction.

I. IRB Committee Responsibilities.
   A. Quorum.
      1. An IRB Committee meeting may convene and render a vote only under the following conditions:
         a) Quorum requires a majority of the Committee voting members present defined as one-half of the members plus one (e.g., 10 voting members requires 6 voting members for quorum; 9 voting members requires 6 voting members for quorum); and
         b) A minimum of one non-scientist present.
      2. Whenever possible, the IRB Committee meetings should take place with all participating IRB members physically present. However, circumstances sometimes warrant conducting IRB Committee meetings via a telephone conference call under the following conditions:
         a) Each Committee member will receive all pertinent materials prior to the meeting and
         b) The Committee member on the telephone will actively and equally participate in the discussion of all protocols (e.g., each member can hear and be heard by all other participating members).
      3. When reviewing research that involves children or prisoners, a Committee member, an ad hoc member or an expert consultant who has special knowledge of these vulnerable populations is required to be present during the review and approval process. If the reviewer providing the expertise with regard to the vulnerable population is not included on the IRB roster as a voting member or alternate, he or she may not vote and may not count towards quorum. Additionally, when reviewing research sponsored by the Department of Education, the Committee must include one person with expertise in handicapped children or mentally disabled persons when reviewing research on those populations.
      4. Failure of Quorum During a Convened Meeting. Should quorum fail during the meeting (e.g., those with conflicts of interest being excused, early departures, loss of the non-scientific member), the meeting should be terminated from further vote until quorum can be restored.
   B. Conflict of Interest.
      1. An IRB Committee member may not participate in the initial or continuing review of a project in which the member has an actual conflict or the appearance of a conflict, except to provide information requested by the IRB Committee.
      2. IRB Committee members should identify any potential conflicts on the agenda at the beginning of the meeting and absent themselves from the meeting room when the IRB Committee discusses and votes on the research in which they have a conflict of interest and such should be noted in the Committee minutes.
II. HRPP Regulatory Compliance Analyst (RCA) Responsibilities.

A. The RCA will maintain attendance logs in order to assure that quorum is maintained despite absences and conflicts of interests, for scheduled IRB Committee meetings.

B. The RCA in attendance at the Committee meeting is responsible for recording accurate quorum notes and assuring that quorum is maintained throughout the meeting.

C. When the IRB Committee reviews research that involves a vulnerable population the RCA will assure that the IRB Committee Members present, includes someone who is knowledgeable and meets the requirements to review the proposed research, or assist in scheduling a consultant or ad hoc reviewer to conduct the review.

References:
HRPP Policy VII.B