

UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care

Guidelines for Conducting Collaborative Research with the UPMC Insurance Services Division

The **UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care** (Center) is a nonprofit organization owned by UPMC and housed within the UPMC Insurance Services Division (ISD). The Center's mission is to advance U.S. health care policy and practice through the development and dissemination of innovative service delivery and payment models that support value-driven health care. (See also http://www.upmchighvaluehealthcare.com/mission_and_vision.html)

Our mission is, in part, achieved through collaborative research activities focused on ISD priority areas. Refer to our Center website for a list of priority areas and consult with Center staff regarding updates to or questions about these priorities. It is expected that the Center and ISD leadership/representatives are fully engaged in the collaborative research process through all stages of the work, beginning with generating research ideas/questions. Guidelines for all external entities seeking to apply for or conduct externally-funded and other collaborative research studies with business units of the ISD are summarized below.

Requests for Research Collaboration

The following steps should be followed for all requests for formal research collaborations (i.e., studies requiring use of ISD resources, including staff time, subject matter expertise, data) whether or not you are pursuing external funding.

- Early engagement with Center staff in conversations and planning about potential research collaboration ideas.
- Submission of a completed **Request for Research Collaboration with the UPMC Insurance Services Division** to the Center. This form includes important information needed to adequately review the request and can be obtained from the Center Program Administrator or downloaded from our website. The early conversations with Center and ISD leadership can inform the completion of this required request form.
- Requests are reviewed monthly and approved or declined by the ISD **Research and Quality Improvement Committee (RQIC)** based on relevance to Center/ISD mission and goals, proposed role of the Center/ISD in the research, legal/financial considerations, and soundness/feasibility of the approach.
- Following RQIC review, Center staff communicates RQIC decisions to potential collaborators and facilitates recommended follow up actions in a timely manner.

Under unique circumstances, if a request for research collaboration occurs after proposal submission or initiation of the study, a copy of the funded proposal or research protocol must be submitted along with the standard request form.

Proposal Development

All approved requests for formal research collaborations must include either a Center/ISD subcontract or a consortia/vendor agreement. A letter of intent to enter into a subcontract must be in place prior to the submission of the research proposal to any funding agency.

- Center staff will work directly with the external entity to develop the scope of work/budget or agreement.
- Center/ISD staff participating as investigators on the study may contribute to other aspects of proposal development (e.g., scientific content, data collection/analytics).
- The typical amount of time needed to collaborate on a proposal submission, obtain RQIC and legal review, and gather all of the necessary subcontract materials and signatures is up to 4-6 weeks, underscoring the importance of early engagement with the Center.

Conduct of Research

Upon the receipt of an award and/or initiation of the study, Center staff will work to formalize the research collaboration as proposed, including facilitating contractual arrangements with the ISD Legal Department, ensuring adherence to HIPAA-compliant procedures, etc. All research protocols must go through an independent formal review process by an authorized institutional review board or quality improvement review committee.

Research-related Activities Not Supported by the ISD/Center

Please note that the ISD will not: (1) Identify Health Plan members for external entities to contact directly for research purposes and (2) Release protected health information of members without the individual's informed consent and IRB approval. Additionally, honest broker services may be required to ensure that the data sent to or exchanged with collaborators is compliant with HIPAA regulations.

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Letters of Support

Letters of support for informal research collaborations (i.e., studies not requiring use of ISD resources) may be obtained without formal RQIC approval by contacting the Center directly. Additional information may be requested by Center staff to proceed with such requests including engaging of leadership or other decision makers across the ISD about the nature of the work. As such, these requests usually require prior discussions with the ISD about the content and aims of a proposal.

Research Publications

Final drafts of all collaborative research publications must be reviewed and approved by the relevant Center/ISD staff and leadership; the Center/ISD reserve the right to be acknowledged (or not) as specified in the contract/agreement.

To obtain a request form or more information, please visit <http://www.upmchighvaluehealthcare.com/resources.html> or contact:

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