

## NASRHP Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee Charter

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## ARTICLE I

### NAME

#### 1.01 Name

The name of this Committee shall be the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee (hereafter also referred to as the *Research Committee* or the *Committee*), which is part of the Society of North American Refugee Healthcare Providers (hereafter also referred to as the *Society, SNARHP* or *NASRHP*).

## ARTICLE II

### MISSION, VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND CORE ACTIVITIES

#### 2.01 Mission

The mission of the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee is to foster refugee health research among members of the Society of North American Refugee Healthcare Providers and to act as a source of research expertise and support for the broader refugee health community.

#### 2.02 Vision

The vision of the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee is to create a refugee health evidence base and to support data driven program creation and evaluation in order to improve refugee health outcomes for refugee children, families, individuals and communities.

#### 2.03 Values

The Research Committee recognizes the importance of evidence-based practice in the improvement of healthcare quality for refugee patients. It strives for *research justice* in a framework that recognizes refugees as the experts on their own communities, and supports their self-determination, including the ability to reclaim and wield their own research knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The Committee values refugee health research as an equitable, collaborative, and multidisciplinary field in which refugees are equal and fully engaged research partners through all phases of the research process. Central to the Committee's values are the ethical guidelines described in the *Belmont report*: beneficence, justice, and respect for persons.<sup>2</sup> Core values of the Committee's research activities also include cultural and linguistic sensitivity; adherence to the highest ethical

and professional research standards, particularly with respect to informed consent; and creation of evidence-based practices in refugee health.

## 2.04 Goals

The Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee's goals include, but are not limited to the following under its headings. The Committee will:

### ***Research:***

- **Establish professional research standards in refugee health research;**
- Collaboratively support the formation of research agendas by members of the *Society*;
- Support the next generation of researchers;
- Provide technical support for members;
- Support research for new investigations, insights, and innovative solutions to refugee health problems;<sup>3</sup>
- Encourage data-sharing principles while protecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants;
- Support open access and widespread dissemination of evidence-based findings;
- Foster translation of research findings to clinical, policy, and advocacy work;
- Support equal authorship rights, and commit to equal opportunity for research leadership and partnerships, particularly for refugees, host communities, and international partners; and
- **Create a refugee health evidence base.**

### ***Ethics:***

- **Establish an ethical framework in refugee health research;**
- Support the application of ethical principles in refugee health research, as described in the Belmont report: particularly informed consent, assessment of risk and benefits, and selection of participants;<sup>2</sup>
- Develop resources for standard Institutional Review Board (IRB) language in refugee health research;
- Guide social justice recommendations related to refugee populations; and
- Promote advocacy-related research in order to inform larger political decisions.

### ***Evaluation:***

- **Support evaluation of existing refugee health structures and programs via program evaluation, research, and quality improvement initiatives;**
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based refugee health services;
- Inform the development and improvement of refugee health programs and policies, including the development of policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts; and
- Guide public health practices among refugee populations.

## 2.05 Core Activities

The Committee will serve as a platform for multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary collaboration, and will promote diversity, inclusivity, and community-engaged approaches in its three fields of research, evaluation, and ethics.

The Committee will contribute to knowledge creation through the dissemination of high-quality original research, evidence-based clinical and screening guidelines, and the development of educational platforms. It serves as one of the first bodies of expertise and guidance in the domain of refugee health research and program evaluation and thus is designed to play a critical role in shaping the field. Committee activities may be subject to review by the board of the *Society*.

The Committee notes its initial activities will focus on refugee communities in North America, given the geographic purview of the *Society's* membership. Over time, the Committee's activities may expand to partnership with international refugee communities. Future activities may include, but are not limited to: submitting requests for proposals (RFPs) and grant applications, capacity-building, trainee research opportunities, educational activities, and mentorship.

Longitudinal activities of the Committee include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing a framework for best practices in refugee health research, data collection and management, quality improvement, and program evaluation;
- Developing guidelines on the ethical standards of refugee health research;
- Ensuring the inclusion of refugees and host community members as equal partners in all stages of the research process;
- Building capacity and facilitating educational/training opportunities in refugee health research methodology;
- Advocacy, with action-oriented research agendas and a goal of translating research into programs and policy;
- Collaborating and strengthening partnerships with and between refugee and host communities, academic institutions, NGOs, and local, state and federal governments;

- Establishing a compendium of funding sources; and
- Supporting research in under-represented and under-researched refugee and humanitarian crises environments globally.

## **2.06 Function within the *Society***

The purpose of the *Society of North American Refugee Healthcare Providers* is to educate, coordinate, and provide a forum for communication by which members and the public will be better informed about the medical and public health care of refugees in North America. The Research Committee's function within the *Society* shall be to foster new collaborations that produce refugee health research, and to utilize the *Society's* North American Refugee Health Conference, a medical conference that offers Continuing Medical Education, as a means to disseminate that research. The *Society* commits to publicize and disseminate Committee activities during its conference.

To maximize impact and influence, the Committee may explore potential collaborations with other non-profit organizations which fall under the 501(c) (3) section of the internal revenue code and are operated exclusively for educational and charitable purposes.

At the discretion of the Committee members and *Society* board members, internships, research assistant positions, or volunteer opportunities may become available to support the many activities of the Committee. This will provide further opportunities for involvement in said activities and programs in order to have a greater impact for change.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **3.01 Membership**

The Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee will have up to 25 Committee members. At least five positions will be reserved for former refugees resettled in the United States or Canada. The remaining 20 positions will be divided between U.S. and Canadian members, aspiring for parity in country membership. Two members of the Committee must be board members of the *Society of Refugee Health Care Providers* per Society bylaws. These two Committee members will report back to the board during regularly scheduled board meetings.

Members are individuals with professionally diverse backgrounds who support the mission of and can actively contribute to the Committee. The Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee leadership (defined in Article IV) shall have the authority to admit any individual as a member. In

the event that a geographically, professionally, and ethnically diverse membership is unable to be obtained, committee members have the authority to actively recruit members to improve membership diversity. All members must agree to participate in at least one Subcommittee, which is outlined in further detail in Article V.

### **3.02 Vacancies and Selection of Members**

The leadership may fill vacancies due to the expiration of a member's term, resignation, death, or removal of a member or may recruit new members to fill a previously unfilled member position, subject to the maximum number of members under these Bylaws. Individuals interested in serving as members of the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee must complete a survey and statement of interest sent by the leadership. Selection of new members will be made by the current Committee leadership and Steering Subcommittee by majority approval. Members will begin their term upon selection.

### **3.03 Terms**

**(a)** All members shall be invited to serve a three-year term; however the term may be extended until a successor has been invited.

**(b)** Member terms shall be staggered so that approximately half the number of members will end their terms in any given year.

**(c)** Members may serve terms in succession, especially if there are unfilled member positions. Members may serve up to two additional terms in succession.

**(d)** The term of office shall be considered to begin when the new member has accepted the position. The term may be extended until such time as a successor has been invited.

### **3.04 Dues**

All members are expected to be members of the *Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers* and must pay their respective dues to the Society. No additional dues are expected by members to participate in the Research Committee.

### **3.05 Removal of Members**

A member may be removed, if:

**(a)** the member is absent and unexcused from two or more Committee meetings or two or more Subcommittee meetings in a twelve month period. The Committee and the Subcommittees' leadership are empowered to excuse members from attendance.

(b) the member fails to contribute to projects or initiatives undertaken by their assigned Subcommittee(s). Adequate member contribution and involvement is determined by the Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee and Subcommittee leadership.

### **3.06 Membership Meetings**

(a) Regular Meetings. The Research Committee shall have a minimum of four all-member meetings each calendar year at dates, times and places fixed by the leadership. Committee members will be notified of meetings by electronic mail, delivered personally or by telephone, with 21 days notice. If sent by electronic mail, the notice shall be deemed to be delivered upon its deposit in the mail or transmission system. Notice of meetings shall specify the place, day, and hour of meeting. All meetings will be held via teleconference and in-person during the annual North American Refugee Health Conference (NARHC) for those who are able to attend the conference. An agenda will be prepared by leadership and disseminated prior to the meeting.

(b) Subcommittee Meetings. In addition to all-member regular meetings, each Subcommittee will establish separate meetings to carry forth any discussions or activities within the Subcommittee. Subcommittee meetings will be led by the Chair(s) of the Subcommittee. The frequency, day and hour of meetings will be established by the Subcommittee leadership. This is detailed further in Article V.

### **3.07 Compensation for Membership**

Participation in the Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee is fully voluntary. Members are not expected to receive compensation for their participation. However, pending funding availability, there is a possibility of waiving Society membership dues and/or NARHC registration fees for resettled refugees to encourage participation in and contribution to the Committee.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **LEADERSHIP**

#### **4.01 Leadership Structure**

The Research Committee will have 2 Co-Chairs and 1 Vice-Chair. Any Subcommittees formed under the Research Committee will have their own leadership structure, which is further described in Article V.

#### **4.02 Leadership Roles**

The Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee Co-Chairs are responsible for 1) leading the all-member regular meetings, 2) coordinating the selection of new members and leaders with the Steering Subcommittee, 3) overseeing the formation and dissolution of Subcommittees, and 4) ensuring timely completion of Committee tasks and activities.

The Research Committee Vice-Chair will be responsible for 1) filling in during a Co-Chair's absence, 2) soliciting items, drafting the agenda, and communicating the agenda for the all-member regular meetings, 3) assisting with supportive tasks such as taking notes during all-member regular meetings, and 4) supporting the Co-Chairs in their roles outlined above.

#### **4.03 Terms**

**(a)** All leaders shall be invited to serve a two-year term; however, the term may be extended until a successor has been identified.

**(b)** Leadership terms shall be staggered by six months to one year to support the onboarding process of each successor.

**(c)** If a leadership position remains unfilled, leadership may serve up to one additional term in succession.

**(d)** The term of office shall be considered to begin when the new leader has accepted the position. The term may be extended until such time as a successor has been invited.

**(e)** The Vice-Chair will be the first to be given the opportunity to assume a Co-Chair role when a position becomes open.

#### **4.04 Qualifications of Leaders**

In order to be eligible to serve as a Co-Chair or Vice-Chair, the individual must be 18 years of age and a member in good standing with the *Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers* and the Research, Evaluation and Ethics Committee. Incoming Co-Chairs and Vice-Chair must have served on the Committee for at least one year. The selection of Co-Chairs to replace those who have fulfilled their term of office shall take place in January of each year (see Article 4.05). If a Co-Chair or Vice-Chair position becomes open earlier than January of the subsequent year, leaders can be selected to fill positions earlier.

#### **4.05 Selection of Leaders**

Individuals interested in serving as a Co-Chair or Vice-Chair must submit a statement of interest to the current Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee leadership and the Steering



Subcommittee. Selection of new leadership will be made by the current Committee leadership and Steering Subcommittee by majority approval. Terms of office shall begin in January of each year, or earlier in case of an open position.

#### **4.06 Leadership Meetings**

(a) Leadership Meetings. The Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee leadership shall have a minimum of four leadership meetings during each calendar year at times and places fixed by the leadership. Leadership meetings shall be held upon fourteen (14) days notice by electronic mail, delivered personally or by telephone. If sent by electronic mail, the notice shall be deemed to be delivered upon its deposit in the mail or transmission system. Notice of meetings shall specify the day and hour of meeting. All meetings will be held via teleconference and in-person during the annual NARHC for those who are able to attend the conference. An agenda will be prepared by leadership and disseminated prior to the meeting.

(b) Regular Meetings. The Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee leadership will be responsible for leading the all-member regular meetings each calendar year at times fixed by the leadership. Regular meetings will be held via teleconference and in-person during the annual NARHC. At least two leadership members must be available and present at the all-member regular meetings. Other leadership members are empowered to excuse other leadership from attendance.

(b) Subcommittee Meetings. At least one Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee leadership member must join each Subcommittee. The Research Committee leadership are not expected to lead the Subcommittees, but they are expected to actively contribute to Subcommittee activities.

#### **4.07 Compensation for Leadership**

Participation in the Research Committee is fully voluntary, and members will not receive compensation for their participation.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **SUBCOMMITTEES**

#### **5.01 Purpose**

The purpose of the Subcommittee(s) is to collectively accomplish activities identified by the group.

## **5.02 Subcommittee Formation**

Subcommittees may be formed in one of two ways: 1) by Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee leadership and Steering Subcommittee or 2) by Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee membership.

If the Committee leadership identifies a potential Subcommittee, the leadership must first receive approval from the Steering Subcommittee. Upon approval from the Steering Subcommittee, the Research Committee will then share the concept with the Research Committee membership for majority approval. This can occur via electronic mail communication or during an all-membership telephone or in-person meeting.

If any member of the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee identifies a potential Subcommittee, they must first receive majority approval from the Committee leadership. Upon approval from the Committee leadership, the member(s) can then share the concept with the rest of the Committee membership for majority approval. This can occur via electronic mail communication or during an all-membership telephone or in-person meeting.

## **5.03 Subcommittee Dissolution**

If a Subcommittee has achieved its objectives and members feel that its existence is no longer needed, the Subcommittee must then seek approval by the Committee leadership to dissolve. Upon approval by the Committee leadership, the Subcommittee can cease further activity and meetings.

## **5.04 Subcommittee Membership**

**a)** A Subcommittee must be comprised of at least four members. Members will be recruited from the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee membership.

**b)** Each member of the Committee must agree to participate in at least one Subcommittee.

## **5.05 Subcommittee Leadership**

After a Subcommittee has been established, the Subcommittee members must identify a Chair(s) of the Subcommittee. The Chair(s) will be responsible for leading the Subcommittee meetings, establishing the meeting agenda, ensuring active participation by all Subcommittee members, and ensuring that the Subcommittee accomplishes identified activities in a timely manner.

## **5.06 Subcommittee Meetings**

Each Subcommittee will establish separate meetings to carry forth any discussions or activities within the Subcommittee. These meetings will be in addition to the all-membership meetings led by the Research Committee leadership. The frequency, day and hour of meetings will be established by the Subcommittee Chair(s). All meetings will be held via teleconference with the possibility of an in-person meeting during the annual NARHC for those who are able to attend the conference.

### **5.07 Steering Subcommittee**

A Steering Subcommittee will serve as an advisory group to the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee leadership. Committee leadership can seek the guidance of the Steering Subcommittee for matters relevant to the Committee. The Subcommittee will also assist in the recruitment and approval of new members and leaders.

The Subcommittee will be comprised of four to five members. Members may be recruited from the general membership by the Committee leadership. At least one member of the Steering Subcommittee must be a resettled refugee from the United States or Canada. If and when a vacancy within the Steering Subcommittee opens, other members of the Committee can make a request to the leadership to be considered.

#### **5.07.01 Steering Subcommittee Terms**

Each Steering Subcommittee member will serve a two-year term; however, the term may be extended until a successor has been invited. Steering Subcommittee members may serve up to one additional term in succession, especially if there are unfilled positions on the Subcommittee. The term of office shall be considered to begin when the new member has accepted the position. The term may be extended until such time as a successor has been invited.

### **5.08 Resettled Refugee Review Board**

A Review Board will comprise of resettled refugee members of the Research, Evaluation, and Ethics Committee. Committee members may request the Resettled Refugee Review Board to review and provide feedback or guidance for proposed projects within the Committee and Subcommittee. The Review Board will help ensure that projects support the needs of resettled refugee populations and are aligned with principles of ethical research with refugee populations.

## References

1. Data Center: Research for Justice: <http://www.datacenter.org/services-offered/research-justice/>
2. The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research. [Bethesda, Md.]: The Commission, 1978.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "National Public Health Performance Standards Program: Orientation to the Essential Public Health Services." Powerpoint. 2010. Accessed on 2/8/20.