Decedent Research

Modified: June 2017

Background:

Research that uses only human cadavers, cadaveric tissue, decedent medical record information or discarded decedent specimens from clinical use is not subject to the federal human research rules but is covered the federal Privacy Rule (ie: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 - HIPAA).

Q: Do I need to seek approval from the IRB if I want to conduct decedent research?

Yes. To address ethical issues regarding decedent research, all University faculty, students and trainees conducting this type of research must submit an application to the University of Florida IRB (IRB-01 or IRB-03), which also serves as Privacy Boards for the University of Florida.

Q: How do I submit to the IRB a request to conduct decedent research?

Submit two copies of the “HIPAA – Certificate for Research with Decedents Info (UF/Shands version)” located on the IRB website to the IRB office. Any necessary changes needed by the IRB will be requested back to the submitter via email. Upon approval, a letter and a stamped copy of the certificate are sent to the Researcher, and a copy of the letter and stamped original certificate is maintained in an IRB file.

Q: What if my research involves both decedents and living individuals?

For studies that involve BOTH living subjects and human decedents (cadavers, tissue or medical record data, including the use of fetal tissue), the IRB is the institutional committee with jurisdiction for oversight and approval. Therefore, a research study must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval before the study can be initiated.