Northern Health Operational Approval for Research Projects

Northern Health supports partnership and participation in research activities, for innovation and evidence-based practice. We use knowledge generated from research to improve the quality and safety of services we deliver, and as a vehicle to create change in our region and encourage excellence in our staff.

All research conducted within, or for Northern Health (NH) must be approved by the Northern Health Research Review Committee (RRC). The RRC is also directed to consider the impact of the research on the NH organization. As such, the researcher must obtain operational approval as part of the *Application for Research Approval* to the RRC. This ensures that there is knowledge about and support for the research happening in the region, as well as acceptance of risk and acknowledgement of benefit.

How do I obtain Operational Approval?

Complete the Application for Operational Approval for Research. The form will ask for the following information:
- Project title and purpose of the research
- Names, contact information and signatures of Principal Investigator and, if applicable, Academic Supervisor
- Names of additional Investigators and, if applicable, the Primary Contact for the study
- Research Ethics Board(s) reviewing the study, REB file number, and current status of REB review/approval
- Identification and description of the NH services or support required to conduct the research
- Identification of the specific departments/sites from which services or support is required and signatures from NH manager(s) responsible for department authorization. In lieu of signatures, an email from the Manager(s) can be submitted to researchcommittee@northernhealth.ca.
- Acknowledgement of information that will be shared, and identification of categories for the study (refer to the last page of this document for a description of the categories).

Who Grants Operational Approval for Northern Health?

Operational approval is granted by the Manager or Director in the NH hospital department(s) and community site(s) that will be impacted by the proposed research (i.e. where the research is taking place), or an appropriate Executive level staff person. The individual has appropriate authority to assess the impact and to support the dedication of resources (e.g., human or financial resources, space in the facility) to the project (if applicable). Some projects may require approval from more than one Manager or Director.

Operational approval cannot come from the researcher or a co-investigator on the project. It is a conflict of interest to approve NH resources for a project while acting as a primary researcher or co-investigator on that project. NH staff are encouraged to pursue research opportunities as principal or co-investigators, but for the purposes of the RRC's review for ethical merit and organizational impact, there must be approval for this activity by another NH employee with appropriate authority to avoid potential conflict of interest.

What is the Role of the Northern Health "Approval" Manager?

- To review the research project to determine the organizational impact and whether their area is able to support the research.
- To sign the researcher's *Application for Operational Approval for Research* indicating the resources (e.g. human or financial resources, space) required to conduct the research can be provided and that the activities can be executed while normal service delivery for patient care is

maintained.   Approval   may   also   be   provided   by   sending   an   email   to researchcommittee@northernhealth.ca citing the study name (and file number if available).
- o If the required services will have sufficient impact as to require recovery from the research study budget to offset NH operating costs, the department and researcher will negotiate these costs.
- To indicate (by providing approval) a willingness to participate and support the research study. The approval also acknowledges that the individual will support knowledge translation[1] (i.e., bringing the research to practice and decision-making). This may include: assistance with dissemination of findings within the organization, discussion about and, as appropriate, implementation of recommendations from the research, supporting Northern Health staff in co-authoring publications, providing venues for workshops or presentations, or other ways that the knowledge generated from the research in our region is appropriately shared and contributes to policy and practice improvements.
- To communicate to the appropriate people in the organization that the research is happening and is supported by Northern Health, and how the organization is supporting this research.

*Note: a letter of support from the department manager is **not** required. Approval may be provided by either signing the Application for Operational Approval for Research or by sending an email to researchcommittee@northernhealth.ca citing the study name (and file number if available).*

What are the Responsibilities of the Researcher?

The researcher must submit an *Application for Research Approval* to the Northern Health Research Review Committee. This requires the researcher to
- Identify the NH department/site(s) that will be asked to provide services or support required to conduct the research;
- Contact the individual department/site managers to review the details of the services required from the department and for specific department requirements and fee schedules (where applicable);
- Obtain operational approval from the individual with signing authority for the specific department/site (the individual signs the *Application for Operational Approval for Research* or sends an email to researchcommittee@northernhealth.ca to provide approval);
- Confirm that the NH service department(s) impacted by the research have received a copy of the RRC's *Letter of Approval* before services, previously negotiated, are provided; and,
- Ensure all other required agreements are signed (e.g. privacy, confidentiality, data/chart request)

The research project may commence in Northern Health ONLY after the Research Review Committee has issued written approval that all conditions for operational and research ethics approval have been met.

For more information on the Research Review Committee and its process or assistance in identifying appropriate Northern Health Managers to contact regarding Operational Approval, contact researchcommittee@northernhealth.ca

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[1] Knowledge translation is about turning knowledge into action – it enables evidence-informed decision-making and practice. The most frequently cited definition of knowledge translation comes from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research: "*knowledge translation is the exchange, synthesis and ethically-sound application of knowledge - within a complex system of interactions among researchers and users - to accelerate the capture of the benefits of research for Canadians through improved health, more effective services and products, and a strengthened health care system (Knowledge Translation Strategy 2004-2009: Innovation in action. Retrieved July 28, 2008 from: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/26574.html)*

Research Categories

Research approved by the Northern Health Research Review Committee is categorized and listed on the Northern Health website and in the Research Annual Report. On the *Application for Operational Approval for Research*, please select one to three categories that best describe your study by checking on the appropriate box(es). The categories are defined below:

- *Aboriginal health* (research about the health of First Nations populations)
- *Acute care* (research on hospital-based care)
- *Cancer* (research that falls in the cancer care continuum of prevention, screening, treatment and palliation)
- *Child & youth* (research focused on the health of children and youth)
- *Chronic disease* (research on disease that is long lasting or recurrent; e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases, chronic kidney disease, arthritis; *note: cancer is a separate category – cancer research can appear here as a secondary category*)
- *Corporate/business services* (e.g., information & technology services, telehealth, capital planning, finance; *note: health human resources is a separate category*)
- *Critical care* (i.e., emergency, trauma, intensive care)
- *Diagnostics* (i.e., lab, biomedical engineering, diagnostic imaging)
- *Dietetics*
- *Elder care* (research with the elderly population, on issues of elder health)
- *Health services/systems* (research on the organization of health services and health system transformation)
- *Health human resources* (e.g., staffing models and organization, staff development (training, education), recruitment & retention, workplace health & safety)
- *Home care* (wound care, palliative care, disability services, elder care, etc. that takes place in the patient's home)
- *Medication management* (research focusing on the prescription, dispensing, administration, or safe use of medications in health care)
- *Mental health and addictions*
- *Nursing*
- *Palliative care* (i.e., end of life care)
- *Patient-oriented research* (i.e., defined by the Canadian Institutes for Healthcare Research as "a continuum of research that engages patients as partners, focuses on patient-identified priorities and improves patient outcomes. This research, conducted by multidisciplinary teams in partnership with relevant stakeholders, aims to apply the knowledge generated to improve healthcare systems and practices.")
- *Perinatal* (research on the time period from conception through pregnancy, delivery, post partum, and early parenting steps)
- *Pharmacy*
- *Primary health care*
- *Public and population health* (e.g., social determinants of health, communicable disease prevention & management, preventive public health, health promotion)
- *Rehabilitation* (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy)
- *Surgical services*