



Ask the Expert

Q: I'm considering becoming a research volunteer and keep hearing about an Institutional Review Board. What is this and why is it important?

A: An Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee that reviews, monitors and approves or disapproves research activities involving human subjects. IRB oversight aims to protect the rights and welfare of research participants. The role of an IRB is to ensure that research studies comply with the rules and regulations established by the federal government, assure that the risks to research subjects are minimized, and that participation by research subjects is done so on a voluntary, informed basis. It's important to note that every clinical trial must be approved and monitored by the participating facility's IRB prior to enrolling any human subjects.

Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers are members of the Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) system of hospitals, one of the largest healthcare systems in the western United States with 40 hospitals throughout Arizona, California and Nevada. CHW conducts medical research involving human subjects in a variety of clinically significant areas. Research is critical to CHW's collective ability to improve the quality of life for all persons, to find new ways to mitigate the pain and suffering caused by illness and injury, and to further the healing ministry that is the basis for our existence.

CHW currently supports 18 internal IRBs providing oversight for nearly 1,000 clinical trials at 33 hospitals throughout the system. CHW's Human Research Protection Office provides for the regulatory and compliance oversight of all research conducted within CHW. Our goal is to ensure that the research conducted throughout the system is done so ethically, safely and efficiently, in addition to supporting the development of local research activities conducted by doctors and research investigators at Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers.

To learn more about the clinical trials currently underway at Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers, please visit www.ChandlerRegional.org or www.MercyGilbert.org.



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