



**Letter from  
Heartland Institutional Review Board  
to the  
Research Participant**

Heartland IRB (also known as HIRB) has been designated to review, approve and monitor research and program evaluation protocols (or plans) involving human participants in non-invasive, social science research or programs. HIRB also serves to protect the rights and welfare of the human participants involved in these studies or programs. HIRB reviews research and program evaluation protocols to make sure each is well-designed and that the risks are as minimal as possible to the participants. HIRB's panel of expert reviewers is comprised of physicians, scientists, university researchers and faculty, professionals in other fields, and community members, as well as some members who are affiliated with HIRB.

It is important to understand that, even though HIRB approves the research and program evaluation protocols not all research studies or programs are right for you. So review all materials that the researcher or program evaluator provides before deciding to become part of any study or program evaluation. The Consent Form given to you by the Principal Investigator, Researcher or Program Evaluator explains everything a potential participant will need to know in order to make a clear, educated choice on whether a particular research study is the right study for him/her. The consent form will include such things as why the research needs to be done, why some information needs to be collected as well as any potential risks and benefits of participating in the project. You may at any time ask the research study team members any questions about the research study hopefully before you sign the form, but also at any time before, during or after the study. Keep asking until you are satisfied with the response and you understand the answer(s) completely. Make sure you keep a copy of the consent form the researcher is required to give you. You may need this information in the future.

Every Principal Investigator or Researcher or Program Evaluator must follow the study protocol exactly. Certain tests and procedures must be followed even if the Principal Investigator would not have done something like that outside of the research study. The research being conducted relies upon the Principal Investigator (or Researcher or Program Evaluator) following the protocol.

As a participant in any research study or program evaluation, you have responsibilities and rights. You will be expected to participate during scheduled parts of the program, and to attend all meetings during which you must complete paperwork or assessments.

As a research study or program evaluation participant, you also have rights:

- 1) You have the right to decide at any time throughout the research study to stop your participation without fear of a penalty or loss of benefits.
- 2) You have the right to maintain all your legal and ethical rights throughout the study. You do not lose any legal rights just because you join a research study or sign a consent form.
- 3) You have the right to be well informed about the research study and to receive and keep your own copy of the consent form and other informational materials about the study.
- 4) You have the right to report adverse incidents or harmful events to the Principal Investigator/Researcher/Program Evaluator and to HIRB.

Being in a research study is an important decision. With any study, there can be unanticipated risks. For each study, the risks involved should be clearly explained in the consent form. Every participant should understand what the anticipated risks are before signing the consent form. It is important to discuss your expectations and have your questions adequately answered before you agree to be in a research study or participate in a program evaluation.

If at any time during your participation in the research study or program under evaluation, an adverse incident or harmful event occurs, please report that to the Investigator/Researcher/Program Evaluator first, and then to HIRB as soon as possible. You may contact HIRB, by going online to <http://www.heartlandirb.org> and completing a Participant Incident Report Form as soon as possible after the incident happens.

Thank you for your willingness to consider participating in a HIRB reviewed research study/program evaluation project. From your participation, the researchers and program evaluators will be able to increase society's understanding of the world and how to improve our capacity to learn.

Cordially,

A.M. Kelly, PhD

Director, HIRB