Institutional Review Boards (IRB) for Indian Health Research
Learning Objectives

• Identify elements essential to protect individuals and communities involved in research – using a case example

• Understand the procedures for approval of research in Indian Country
Three Basic Ethical Principles

Respect for Persons
Application: Informed Consent

Beneficence
Application: Assessment of Harms and Benefits

Justice
Application: Selection of Participants in Research
A Fourth Basic Ethical Principle

Respect for Communities

Application: Community involvement and participation
Case Study #1: Diabetes Screening
Case Study #1: Diabetes Screening

• High prevalence of type 2 Diabetes
• High prevalence of behavioral risk factors – including children
• Community based screening of primary and secondary school children
Case Study #1: Diabetes Screening

- Community, school, family, and individual assessments
- System comprehensiveness and responsibility, resources, communication
- Human subjects protection, vulnerable subjects (assent forms)
National IHS IRB

• Requires tribal approvals for all research and publications (tribal sovereignty)
• Sensitive to cultural appropriateness of study design, questions, and implementation (community-specific knowledge, norms, and world views)
National IHS IRB

- Minimize adverse impact of research by minimizing potential harms and maximizing potential benefits
- Balance ethical concerns (regulations) with promoting research
Research Approval in Indian Country

- Tribal Health Director
- Tribal Health Committee or Board
- Tribal IRB (Navajo)
- Tribal Council
- Host institution’s IRB (University)
- IHS IRB Area
- IHS IRB National
- Funding Agency (NIH, CDC)
Tribal - Researcher Relationships

• Understand and appreciate community research priorities
• Community partnership from inception of the ideas to project completion, and into publication
• Understand and appreciate tribal interests
• Regular and timely tribal consultations
• Community capacity building, benefits to the tribe
• Help tribes understand collaborator responsibilities and requirements
Tribal - Researcher Relationships

- Make available a listing of all public health resources to tribes
- Provide technical assistance to tribes
- Develop training and linkage opportunities to ensure a better understanding of tribal and community based tribal health systems
Contact Information:

- **Power Point Presentation:**
  - Francine C. Romero, PhD, MPH
  - (505) 962-2600
  - epidirector@aastec.org

- **Verbal Presentation:**
  - William L. Freeman, MD, MPH, CIP
  - (360) 392-4284
  - wfreeman@nwic.edu