Office of Research Integrity
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

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Guidance Document:

Advertising and Recruitment

Key Information

Advertising involves providing information to potential participants to solicit their participation in research; it is an extension of the Consent and participant selection process. The CU Boulder IRB must review and approve the information contained in all advertisements and the method of distribution to ensure appropriate participant protections. Advertisements cannot be displayed or used without IRB approval.

Advertisements need to include the basic information needed for prospective participants determine their interest and eligibility.

Required elements:

- Title of the research
- Name of the institution conducting the research
- IRB Protocol Number
- Brief statement of the purpose of the research (clearly state it is research)
- Inclusion criteria
- Brief description of the research activity
- Time commitment for participants
- Location of the research
- Study staff/PI contact information
- FDA regulated studies must comply with the guidance in the FDA Information Sheet, "Recruiting Study Subjects"

Additional elements:

- Brief statement of benefits (if any)
- Compensation
- Exclusion criteria
- Any information participants may need to know before participating

What should not be included in recruitment materials?

Do not:

- State or imply that the FDA or IRB has approved the research.
- Emphasize payment to participants or use the word "free" (e.g., bold, large font, conspicuous coloring, dollar signs).
- Include compensation amounts for studies involving underage participants.
- Use the terms "*confidential*" or "*completely private.*"
- Include exaggerated statements about the potential benefits of participating in the research, receiving treatment from the investigator, or receiving treatment from the organization
- Use phrases to imply urgency such as "*Enrollment Limited*," "*Study ends soon*," or "*Call today!*"
- Include suggestive statements such as "*You deserve to feel better*" or "*Join this study and take charge of your life*."
- Include references to website recruitment content that has not been reviewed and approved by the IRB.
- Refer to investigational drugs, devices, or procedures as "*new*," "*safe*," "*effective*," "*a cure*," "*treatment*" or "*therapy*."

- Call the investigational medication simply "*medication*" or "*drug*"; qualify each use appropriately with "*investigational*" or "*study*" as in "*investigational medication*" or "*study medication*."

What recruitment methods can I use?

There are numerous methods for recruitment.

- Bulletin board tear-offs*
- Posters/flyers*
- Newspaper ads*
- Radio or television announcements
- Health fair materials about the study
- Online advertising, computer bulletin boards, or social media*
- Research Subject Pools
- Press releases designed to promote a study and encourage participation
- Presentations given to groups to solicit participants (scripts and/or PowerPoints).
- “Snowball” recruiting materials
- Mailings (email or paper)

*You can use the Advertisement Components Form to receive IRB approval for textual components for written advertising materials. Written advertisements using only these approved textual components do not need to be submitted separately to the IRB for review.

Can I recruit employees I supervise or students I teach?

Studies of participants who are directly supervised by the investigator(s) or who are the investigator's students entail confidentiality problems and issues of coercion or obligation (either real or perceived) which are best avoided whenever possible. If potential participants must be drawn from an investigator's supervised employees or classroom, specific provisions must be included to minimize the possibility of undue influence to participate in the study to the greatest extent possible. For example, a non-supervisory co-investigator should directly recruit participants rather than the supervising investigator or course instructor. Participation must in no way influence employment, grading, or course outcome and participants should be expressly informed of this. For complete details and requirements regarding students as research participants, see the Guidance Document: “Students as Research Subjects: How to Avoid Undue Influence and Coercion.”