

MCG Human Research Protection Program Receives Accreditation



Left to right: Michelle Christiano, and Ivy Tillman, Director and Assistant Director, respectively, of OHRP at MCG

The Medical College of Georgia Human Research Protection Program, in collaboration with the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center and MCGHealth, has been fully accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs.

MCG joins 128 other organizations representing more than 550 entities with the association's accreditation. Forty-two percent of the nation's research universities, 36 percent of U.S. medical schools and 52 percent of Department of Veterans Affairs facilities are now accredited.

The association works with organizations that conduct human research to optimize protection for research participants and to promote ethically sound practices. The voluntary accreditation process is conducted by teams from peer institutions.

The MCG Human Research Protection Program educates and trains faculty, staff and students regarding studies that involve human subjects and/or human-derived materials; audits those studies; and provides administrative support to institutional review boards.

Research participants are often patients at MCGHealth, the non-profit entity that operates MCG's clinical facilities, or the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

"This approval speaks to the overall excellence of our program," says Michelle Christiano, program director. "Accreditation ensures that we provide the most

comprehensive protections for research participants and that our high ethical and professional standards enhance the well-being of people who participate in our research.”

Accreditation criteria, which exceed federal standards, include extensive safeguards in every level of research, adherence to the highest research standards, conflict-of-interest policies, community outreach/education and uniform policies and protections for all research subjects.

“Accreditation holds organizations to the highest standards of protection, so each accreditation marks another milestone for research participants and for all of us who are committed to safe, ethical, excellent research,” says Marjorie A. Speers, president of the association. “As more organizations attain accreditation, participants will be able to consider accreditation status when deciding whether to participate in a particular research study. They will have more options, and organizations will have even more incentive to pursue accreditation.”

The three-year accreditation is available to U.S. and international organizations that conduct biomedical or behavioral and social sciences research involving human participants.