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PRIM&R Presents at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Event to Recognize 50th Anniversary of the National Research Act

BOSTON – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) invited Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research (PRIM&R) to provide a historical overview of the nonprofit, which was founded 50 years ago, as the federal government enacted the National Research Act in 1974. The new law required the development of guidelines to oversee and regulate human research.

During a recent virtual event, OHRP recognized the milestone legislation. “The National Research Act was a response to public outcry that the federal government let hundreds of Black men in rural Alabama go untreated for syphilis for 40 years to study the impact of the disease on the human body. The Act included creation of federal rules to protect human participants in research,” the Department of Health and Human Services [wrote](#) online. “It also led to the establishment of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research to identify ethical standards to guide human research.”

OHRP held the virtual event July 12 to “reflect on what happened following the passage of the National Research Act, showcase the diverse role research participants play in contemporary research, and consider what future scientific advances may mean for research participants and public trust in research.”

PRIM&R Executive Director Ivy Tillman, EdD, CIP, shared a presentation, titled, “A Brief History of Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research (PRIM&R) – A Response from the Research Community” and recalled the priorities of the national nonprofit organization. “The founders wanted to place ‘subjects rights’ before ‘freedom of inquiry,’ and that grounded everything that they did at PRIM&R -- and that we do now,” Tillman said during her remarks.

“For five decades, PRIM&R has been dedicated to advancing the highest ethical standards in the conduct of scientific research. Now, as we look to the future, PRIM&R is focused on taking steps to restore public trust in science,” Tillman said. “The public must know that research ethics professionals exist and that we are partnering with scientists, researchers, and industry to advance the highest ethical standards in science and research.”

About PRIM&R

Since 1974, PRIM&R has advanced the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research. We accomplish this mission through education, membership services, professional certification, public policy initiatives, and community building. PRIM&R is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Find out more at www.primr.org

[Click here to watch the video commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the National Research Act](#)

[Click here to learn more about the OHRP panel discussion](#)

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