**Implementing a Comprehensive Customer Service Program at an IRB**

Megan Aiken, BA, CIP  
Copernicus Group IRB

**Submission Type:** Programmatic  
**Topic Area:** IRB Operations  
**Poster Number:** 63

**Statement of Problem:** Researchers often see the IRB as a burden or hurdle to overcome in the research enterprise. This is why the IRB should focus not only on the work that is done to protect human subjects, but also on ways to measure success in providing a service to help investigators who are working with the IRB as part of the process to conduct important research. Time is of the essence in research and costs are of particular concern; with smaller research and development budgets over the last several years, there is increased demand to improve efficiency and turnaround times for approval of research protocols. Additionally, there is increased scrutiny from research sponsors as they are requiring more metrics to evaluate the performance of the investigators and the IRBs they select to conduct and review their research.

**Description of the Program and Suggestions for Implementation at Other Sites:** Our IRB has developed a comprehensive customer service program that helps to build on the idea of a partnership with the researchers during the IRB review process. The program consists of five key components: 1. Developing the Client Relation Manager role; 2. Providing “initiation” or “kick-off” calls for new protocols; 3. Implementing multiple surveys to evaluate our services; 4. Providing metrics to research partners to assist in reducing approval times; and 5. Using feedback from the researchers (our “customers”) to improve services. Through the process of designing and implementing the comprehensive program, the IRB has been able to evaluate our performance more objectively. Additionally, we’ve been able to analyze trends in feedback and identify areas for process improvement to enhance the experience researchers have when submitting to us as an IRB. IRBs who may not be able to implement all components could still consider adopting one or two components to further enhance their services and to learn more about what will improve their partnerships with researchers.