University of California (UC) IRB Reliance Registry: Facilitating Human Subject Review for Multi-Campus Studies in the UC System
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Program Statement: Our university system, comprising of 10 campuses including seven R1 universities, six medical schools, and a national lab, recognized the benefit to its investigators of a single IRB review for collaborative human subjects research involving multiple campuses. Starting in 2005, the 10 campuses plus one laboratory signed their first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to rely on each other's IRB reviews. In 2012, the system developed an online system, "The Registry," which facilitates documentation, communication between IRBs, and tracking of the status of multi-site human subject studies. In creating The Registry, the goals were to encourage greater collaborations amongst campuses, to make it easier for researchers to collaborate while fulfilling multi-campus IRB requirements, to decrease IRB workload, and to efficiently track reliances for IRBs and the Office of the President.

Description of the Program: This poster describes The Registry's development process, the benefits to the campuses that it has generated, and remaining and on-going challenges of using an online tool to facilitate a single IRB review for multi-site studies in a large research university system. The existence of the MOU and the online Registry promotes collaboration not just among researchers at multiple campuses, but also among the IRB staff across the system. In just two years since its pilot launch, there are around 1,500 researchers working on 428 studies using The Registry. That is 146% increase over a two year period compared to the total number of all multi-site studies conducted under the MOU during the period of six years (2005-2012). The process of developing and adopting The Registry tool also brought to light several existing contradictions and differences between IRB procedures and requirements at different campuses and, as a result, promoted the implementation of more standardized and streamlined IRB procedures among participating campuses. These streamlines procedures have, in turn, further reduced faculty burden and decreased the time for IRB reviews of multi-site studies.

Suggestions for Implementation: The poster will map the complexities of a reliance system, and will illustrate how the process that was implemented streamlined some of those complexities and decreased Investigators' administrative burden associated with multiple IRB reviews of a study. It will also offer lessons learned and tips for designing and implementation of similar systems.