THRIVE: An Inter-O rganizational Partnership Model for Fostering Research Integrity
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Program Description: When different organizations with different values systems collaborate on research that is vital to the community, complications due to cultural differences, competing or disconnected research goals, and varying ethical standards among different disciplines can arise. Collaborative research among various institutional and community researchers raises questions about the research priorities of the various stakeholders; data confidentiality, ownership, and management; dissemination of findings; and perceptions of research misconduct (Harding, et al, 2012). Our program is a partnership between a university and a regional community hospital that serves multiple Native American tribes and other sensitive populations. THRIVE partners represent a university, a hospital system, a biomedical/genomics center, and several Native American tribes whose mission is to address issues around research misconduct and the responsible conduct of research.

Problem Statement: Complications in conducting ethical healthcare research can be due to: 1) involvement of multiple IRBs representing a variety of institutions and multi-cultural communities; 2) data management and dissemination of research involving electronic health records, multi-use biosamples, and other sensitive information; and 3) publication and dissemination of research findings that comply with diverse stakeholders' interests, including Native American tribes.

Method: The THRIVE project aimed to alleviate these complications and develop a model for building consensus among various stakeholders. THRIVE conducted a community-engaged investigation that involved interviews, observations, and focus groups with THRIVE members to determine cross-cultural differences and similarities within and between cultural groups (i.e., the various research stakeholders) in terms of beliefs and behaviors relating to research integrity. This project allowed us to produce a model that 1) accounted for various stakeholder interests and beliefs, and 2) provided a roadmap for arriving at consensus on contentious issues. This project was evaluated by testing the model with new THRIVE members to see if their belief systems could be adequately incorporated into the model.

Conclusion/Next Steps: As collaborative research continues to grow in our region, we see lasting partnerships supported by the THRIVE model. Future goals include improving research integrity and reducing research misconduct across institutions. It has been particularly useful in smoothing the path for researchers to attain review board approval from multiple IRBs. Other institutions seeking to develop partnerships with community organizations would be advised to embrace a...
community-engaged model, such as recommended by the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (2011). Our program is in the process of developing a toolkit to assist other institutions interested in implementing this model.