

Wayne State University Human Investigation Committee	
SUBJECT	Finder's Fee Policy
Section	
Form Date	
Approvals	4/18/01 Steering Committee, 5/10/01 All IRB Committees, 11/10/06 Administrative Review

Background

The term "Finder's Fee" may appear rather self-explanatory. However, in the research context, finder's fees should be viewed differently since the research participant (subject) (who does not receive any part of the finder's fee) will be asked to assume risk that he/she would not encounter under normal conditions.

In the past, the use of a Finder's Fee in recruiting human subjects to a research project may have occurred without thought that the activity might not be ethical. In order to insure that the highest standards of ethics and morals are currently met in the recruitment of human subjects to research studies, the term "Finder's Fee" should be defined and otherwise described.

Definitions

Finder's Fee – payment (money, goods, or services) to a professional made in exchange for referral or recruitment of a subject to a research project.

Payment – a *quid pro quo*, only given when a subject is referred or is enrolled in the study.

Finder – the individual doing the referring or recruiting and may or may not be a member of the research team.

Example: If a physician referred a patient-of-record to a research project and received a cash incentive for the referral, two distinct issues are brought forward: 1) The physician would be acting unethically and possibly in contravention of law to even refer the patient to the research project unless the patient's permission was given to do so and 2) The physician would be acting unethically to accept the Finder's Fee cash no matter whether the patient was informed or not informed.

HIC Policy

The WSU HIC does not allow the use of Finder's Fees for research studies conducted under its auspices. The concern is that use of Finder's Fees will steer the referral of a patient to a particular protocol rather than to a protocol that may be of most benefit to the participant. The participant, not being aware of the remuneration being paid to the recruiting professional, will not have the full disclosure required for truly informed consent.

The WSU HIC does allow an investigator to reward (e.g. books for a resident's/clinic library, pizza) a group of individuals (e.g. residents, staff at a clinic) for time identifying possible study participants as long as the reward is open to all members of the group regardless of whether the member recruited a participant or not.

Members of the research team are compensated for recruiting subjects as part of their job description and may not receive direct cash payments for individual recruitment.

Ref: Lind SE: Finder's fees for research subjects. New England Journal of Medicine 1990; 323: 192-5