Public Health Activities That Do Not Require IRB Review

To prevent unnecessary amendments and to minimize delays in the IRB approval process, it is important for researchers to keep in mind that Texas Governor Abbott issued Executive Order No. GA-36 and Executive Order-No. GA-39 prohibiting governmental agencies and officials from mandating face coverings or asking about vaccination status in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it is appropriate to encourage others to do their part in minimizing the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, Texas A&M University and its employees are prohibited from requiring that another person wear a face covering or provide their vaccination status in order to receive services which includes participation in human subjects research.

Taking precautions against COVID-19 by wearing face coverings or providing vaccination status are public health activities and not research procedures that require IRB review and approval.

If a study specific procedure requires the use of face coverings or knowledge of vaccination status for research purposes, please contact the IRB prior to submission of the protocol.