



Association of American Universities

June 28, 2000

Dear Colleagues:

The AAU Task Force on Research Accountability has just completed its report on the protection of human beings who are the subjects of research. Its purpose is to ensure that the research university community takes strong action to ensure the safety and dignity of human subjects as new treatments and therapies are developed and tested. We urge your prompt attention to this important report and hope that you will find the recommendations useful as you evaluate the policies and practices of your institution.

The Task Force concluded that the system of human subjects research protections in U.S. universities can attain the highest standards through a combination of the following:

1. increased vigilance by senior university management
2. training and examining of all staff and researchers involved in human subjects research
3. strengthening Institutional Review Board training, support, and operations
4. increasing resource availability
5. ensuring public accountability by increasing information available to the public about university systems protecting human subjects

The pursuit of many of these recommendations will undoubtedly involve significant efforts within our campus communities, but changes are necessary if we are to ensure that this important research is conducted consistent with the highest ethical standards and existing laws and regulations—and ensure that the public has complete confidence that human subjects are being properly treated on university campuses.

For all these reasons, the Task Force urges your prompt attention to this assessment and set of recommendations. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any one of us, or any of the other members of the Task Force, all of whom are listed in the report.

Sincerely,

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