What is the Minority Health Research Office and how are we to utilize it? These are the questions I had when I first heard about this new entity on campus. In speaking with Dr. Richard Rigmaiden, the director, I discovered that this office was formed as a result of discussions on how to best address research in minority populations in Nebraska using the Tobacco Settlement Funds.

The Minority Health Research Office was developed both to promote more research studies that addressed health disparities in the African American, Latino and Native American communities and to begin to identify barriers to minority recruitment in research studies performed at UNMC.

Dr. Richard Rigmaiden, cardiology, is the director and coordinates research in African Americans. Dr. Jose Romero, pediatric infectious disease, coordinates research in Latinos and Dr. Jennifer Larsen, diabetes endocrinology, is designated to coordinate research in Native Americans. Community Advisory Boards are being established for each minority community to get input from the community about health issues of concern and to disseminate information about research studies that are being performed.

The office phone number is 9-6143. If there are any questions about studies relative to the populations above they can be addressed to any of the executive committee members.
A Question of Consent  
by LuAnn Larson, BSN, CCRC

Consider this - A patient is being consented to participate in a study. The consent form states that the study drug will be paid for however all other charges associated with infusing the drug will be billed to the insurance company and the participant will be responsible if the insurance company does not pay. They are in a stressful situation. The patient agrees, not really thinking that their insurance may refuse to pay because they had met their deductible easily already that year.

Everything proceeds and a few months later the insurance company, who found out the patient was receiving a “study drug” refuses to pay for the infusion. The patient gets billed $850 for each infusion. They go back to the coordinator and explain that they had no idea it would be SO much. $850 just to have the drug infused? “No one told me how much it would cost.”

This person is right! You did not tell them how much it would actually cost if their insurance company did not pay. The Question is - Did you REALLY get informed consent?

Coordinators’ Corner

Effective late last year Access Services changed how grant accounts are set up. Rather than setting your grant account up as primary or secondary they re-labeled the choices and now call them “Grants RSF Funded” and “Grants Externally Funded”.

When setting up a grant account, if the grant is funded through the Research Support Fund (from the CRC) you would set it up as a “RSF Funded” account. Otherwise you would choose the “Grants Externally Funded” category to set it up. It is being used to track funding apparently but is not working as hoped. Call Deb Justesen with questions 9-8205

VEGF Study Enrolling

The Clinical Research Center is currently enrolling in a study looking at the levels of vascular endothelial growth factor in relation to diabetic retinopathy. The study arms include:
- Diabetic and pregnant
- Diabetic and not pregnant
- Pregnant but not diabetic
- Not pregnant and not diabetic

Must be 19-40 years of age & a non-smoker for at least 6 months. Free eye exams and lab work. Call 9-7685 for more information.

CRC Phone Numbers
559-4837  Jennifer Larsen, MD Director
559-8555  LuAnn Larson, BSN Nurse Manager
559-7685  Clinic

Submit research news items, announcements, recruitment ads and comments to the CRC at 9-8555 or

We’re on the web! www.unmc.edu/crc