Resolution of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the

Blind and Visually Impaired: July 2018

**Ethical Research**

**Resolution Number 2018 - 2**

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Whereas the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is the leading national organization representing professionals in the field of blindness and visual impairment, including practitioners, personnel preparation faculty, and researchers;

Whereas the accuracy and authoritativeness of research activities endorsed and/or disseminated by AER’s national office, chapters, divisions, and representatives to AER members and to the public reflects upon the professionalism, ethics, and rigor of the field of blindness and visual impairment;

Whereas AER newsletters, social media accounts, and listservs are valuable tools for research recruitment and dissemination among, to, and by AER members and the field of blindness and visual impairment;

Whereas the internet and social media enable rapid and wide dissemination of information in AER’s name, recruitment for research studies and publication of research findings; and

Whereas the *AER Code of Ethics* is a “guide that reflects the commitment of professionals within this field to act ethically,” including the following:

* AER members adhere to the principle of “respect for personal rights and dignity – professionals are expected to respect the personal worth of each individual…”
* AER members adhere to the principles of “fidelity and integrity… They maintain ethical standards of behavior and manage conflicts of interest. They also engage in ethical behavior with colleagues, and employers. Honesty and truthfulness extend into their teaching and research.”
* (7.01) “AER Members will not make public statements that are false, deceptive, or fraudulent concerning their research, practice, or other work activities or those of persons or organizations with which they are affiliated.”
* (11.03) “When conducting research AER Members will follow IRB standards that protect research participants.”
* (11.06) “After data are collected, AER Members will provide participants with full clarification of the nature of the study to remove any misconceptions…”
* (13.02) “AER Members will take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues.”

Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, by the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), in convention assembled July 28, 2018, that this organization:

1. urges the national office, state chapters, divisions, and members of AER to carefully consider the *AER Code of Ethics* as it applies to any and all research-related activities, including recruitment for and dissemination of research via newsletters, listservs, social media accounts, conference presentations, etc.;
2. affirms that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) protections of research participants, as required of AER Members by AER’s *Code of Ethics*, applies to the involvement of AER and AER chapters and divisions whenever organizational resources (newsletters, listservs, social media accounts, etc.) are used in the recruitment research participants or the collection of research data;
3. expects that researchers wishing to benefit from AER resources for the recruitment of participants and/or collection of data provide evidence of review and approval of their research by an IRB or ethics review committee;
4. affirms that data collection for registration, planning, and program evaluation in AER’s chapters, divisions, events, and other activities does not constitute research that would require IRB review; however, AER chapters, divisions, events, and individuals must be protective and respectful of any personally-identifiable information collected about members or non-members; information about individuals should not be shared with third parties without prior consent;
5. affirms that the AER code of ethics compels AER representatives, members, chapters, and divisions to avoid disseminating unverified, misleading, or outdated statistics or research claims; and
6. urges the national office, state chapters, divisions, and members of AER to establish advisory committees and/or processes as necessary to support ethically-sound decision-making with regards to sharing of research-related information using AER resources (newsletters, listservs, social media accounts, etc.)