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From: Hayes, Kim <khayes@rti.org>

Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 8:41 AM

To: Tefera, Tef@HCAI <Lemeneh.Tefera@hcai.ca.gov>

Cc: Allen, Jane <janeallen@rti.org>; Armbrister, Vaughn <aarmbrister@rti.org>

Subject: Proposed revision to Protocol ID: 2026-055

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Dear Dr. Tefera,

We are writing in response to the CPHS IRB committee's request to update the consent documents to explicitly identify racial/ethnic identity and sexual orientation as potentially sensitive topics included in the surveys. Our team has reflected carefully on this request and would like to share our perspective.

As we began to implement this request, two concerns came up for us: (1) the possibility of inadvertently stigmatizing certain identities in ways that conflict with the intent of the expanded questions (i.e., inclusivity), and (2) the risk of placing youth participants in uncomfortable or harmful situations with their parents. Below, we've included additional information and proposed a path forward that we believe achieves the intent of the committee's request while also minimizing the risk of harm to youth or creating stigma.

Race and Ethnicity

The survey questions on race and ethnicity were drafted in compliance with California Assembly Bill 1878, which requires state agencies to collect standardized demographic data on ethnic origin, ethnicity, and race in alignment with the Office of Management and Budget's Revised Statistical Policy Directive No. 15

(SPD 15). Questions aligned with SPD 15 are becoming standard across public health research, including national instruments such as the U.S. Census. As more agencies adopt SPD 15, we anticipate this level of detail will remain standard practice in government and public health research. For this reason, we respectfully recommend retaining the current consent language rather than flagging these demographic variables as sensitive.

Sexual Orientation

We share the committee's commitment to transparency and to minimizing risk for participants. At the same time, we have concerns that explicitly identifying sexual orientation as a potentially sensitive topic within the parent/guardian permission could unintentionally place youth participants at risk. Specifically, we worry that such language may prompt some parents or guardians or pressure youth to disclose their answers, which could result in unintended disclosure of sexual identity.

As an alternative, we propose updating the language in the youth assent form only, allowing youth to make an informed decision about participation while reducing the potential for discomfort or harm. We believe this approach better balances transparency with the need to protect youth participants. We've attached our proposed edits for your informal review before we resubmit the package in IRBManager.

We welcome any feedback you have. We are open to discussion and want to identify the best path forward to ensure that youth participants are not placed in uncomfortable or potentially harmful situations.

Thank you for your time and guidance.

Kim

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Pronouns: she, her, hers

From: IRBManager on behalf of CPHS IRB <no-reply@chhs.my.irbmanager.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2026 5:35 PM