IREx January 2026 Quarterly Call - Meeting Summary

Quick recap

The meeting focused on reviewing IREx metrics and new features from Q4 2025, followed by a panel discussion with relying HRPPs sharing their experiences. Tiffany (IREx) presented 2025 metrics showing 115 new studies, 13-day median approval times, and 39 new sites joining. Linda and Emily (IREx) discussed new features including clarifying site enrollment questions and updating email notifications. The panelists, Nicole (University of Michigan), Sarah (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia), and Natalie (University of Pittsburgh), shared their workflows for handling reliance documentation and local context reviews. The discussion highlighted the efficiency of IREx's institutional profiles and study-specific reliance plans, while also identifying areas for potential improvement in the system's guidance and documentation processes.

Summary

IREx Metrics and System Enhancements

Tiffany presented IREx metrics for 2025, highlighting consistent numbers in new studies created and median days from sIRB submission to approval. She noted a 22% increase in new sites joining and emphasized that relying sites are using IREx for multiple studies. Tiffany also discussed the 7 major system enhancements made by the development team and the performance of single IRBs in IREx. Emily commended the improvements in approval times, attributing some of the efficiency gains to better education and process documentation for PIs.

IREx System Updates and Enhancements

The team discussed several updates to the IREx system, including clarifying site enrollment questions and adding study sponsors to email notifications. They also created a new email notification for Reviewing IRBs when sites are added to existing studies that previously only offered SMART V1 or V2 agreements.

IRB Automation and Profile Integration

Emily discussed the implementation of automating local considerations in single IRB processes, highlighting the integration of institutional profile information into HRP surveys to streamline data entry and reduce conflicts between profiles and surveys. She noted that over 90% of IREx sites have completed their institutional profiles, and the feature was released in October 2025 after discussions began in September 2024.

Katelyn highlighted that this change has significantly reduced the time to complete surveys and receive site approvals, with preliminary data showing a decrease from 22.5 to 11.5 days for PI surveys and from 28 to 6 days for HRP surveys. Katelyn shared that several relying sites, including CHOP and UPitt, have successfully used the feature, and she encouraged attendees to reach out for more detailed information on the process improvements.

IREx Relying Site Experience – Panel Discussion

Nicole, the single IRB team lead at University of Michigan, highlighted the convenience of IREx's institutional profiles, study-specific local considerations, and reliance plans. She also mentioned that they use the combo site feature to document partnerships between different locations within the University of Michigan network. Emily inquired about the use of institutional profiles outside of IREx, to which Nicole confirmed they are shared as PDFs with other sites.

Natalie from the University of Pittsburgh HRPP presented on their reliance process, highlighting the efficiency of IREx and their internal documentation methods. She explained their process of using Qualtrics surveys for study details and assigning dedicated reliance team members. Natalie also discussed common pitfalls, such as submitting requests too early or with outdated documents, and emphasized the importance of proper timing and documentation. She concluded by sharing tools and tips for investigators, including guidance documents, timeline overviews, and educational workshops, and suggested improvements to the IREx system, such as attaching guidance documents to outreach emails.

Sarah presented CHOP's process for handling reliance documentation, which involves forwarding IREx emails to the investigative team and providing guidance on local IRB submission requirements. She highlighted common pitfalls, such as missing consent forms with site-specific language, and emphasized the importance of including pediatric considerations in approvals. Sarah also noted that IREx's inclusion of expedited categories and determinations has been helpful for their local context review process.

**This summary was generated by AI, and proofread and finalized by an IREx Team Member.*