SUBJECT: Management of Allegations of Research Misconduct

1. PURPOSE:

The Minneapolis VA Health Care System is committed to conducting all of its research activities with the utmost integrity. The purpose of this SOP is to delineate the procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving allegations of research misconduct involving Minneapolis VA employees and/or VA research.

2. DEFINITIONS:

Research Integrity Officer (RIO): The RIO is the appointed official at the Minneapolis VA who is responsible for receiving and providing local oversight of the handling of, formal allegations of research misconduct.

VA Research: VA research is defined in VHA Directive 1200.02 as "[…] research that is conducted by VA Investigators (serving on compensated, WOC, or IPA appointments) while on VA time or on VA property. The research may be funded by VA, by other sponsors, or be unfunded. The research must be approved by the R & D Committee before it is considered VA research and before it can be initiated."

3. OVERVIEW:

The RIO is responsible for:

a) Ensuring that all of the facility's personnel who are engaged in research activities in their capacities as VA employees are aware of the policies and procedures in Directive 1058.02

b) Overseeing the facility's compliance with the provisions of Directive 1058.02

c) Receiving and processing formal allegations of research misconduct

d) Serving as the primary facility liaison with the Office of Research Oversight for all research misconduct allegations

e) Serving as the primary facility liaison with the RIO (or equivalent position) of any non-VA institution with joint procedural jurisdiction over a research misconduct allegation

f) Providing administrative management of, and support to research misconduct inquiries as delineated in Directive 1058.02

If the VA facility Director determines the RIO has a conflict of interest that cannot be appropriately managed with respect to the research, the respondent, the informant, or other key witnesses in a particular research misconduct case, the RIO must not participate in the oversight of that particular case. The facility Director must appoint an acting RIO who meets the requirements delineated in Directive 1058.02 to oversee such cases.

4. PROCEDURES:

Due to the complexity and importance of these issues, the procedures outlined in VHA Directive 1058.02, VHA Directive 1058.04, and VA Directive 0700, these documents should be directly referenced and used as a guide to conduct inquiries and investigations of research misconduct.

5. **REFERENCES:**

   VA Directive 0700 "Administrative Investigation Boards and Factfindings" (10 August 2021)

   VHA Directive 1058.02 "Research Misconduct" (10 July 2020)

   VHA Directive 1200.02 "Research Business Operations" (06 September 2017)

6. **R&D COMMITTEE APPROVAL:** 07 January 2025

7. **RECISSIONS:** Minneapolis Research Service SOP R&D-012 "Management of Allegations of Research Misconduct" (06 October 2020)

8. **EXPIRATION DATE:** N/A

9. **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** Research and Development (R&D) Committee