Dear Boston Medical Center and Boston University Medical Campus researchers:

During the current period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IRB is receiving an extremely high volume of submissions. As shown in the below graph, there has been about a ~50% increase in the number of new submissions in the 3-month moving average starting in March. There has also been a similarly high number of new amendments that seek to incorporate changes related to adding remote consent processes and the addition of virtual study visits, in order to continue conducting research in compliance with institutional COVID policies and research restrictions.

Please note that the IRB has needed to implement a prioritization system in response to our current research environment. The IRB continues to prioritize certain types of COVID-related submissions, along with studies with strict funding deadlines and studies that are permitted to continue research activities during this period of COVID policies and restrictions on research. As a result, studies that are not directly COVID-related, especially those where enrollment is currently prohibited due to the suspension of in-person research activities, will be subject to delayed review times as compared to our usual turnaround time frame. As seen in the below graph, updated on July 2, 2020, the volume has leveled off (though continues to represent an increase) and the IRB is working hard to catch back up and re-establish our pre-COVID review times.

We thank you for your patience and understanding.