

Collaborations to Understand Research and Ethics Research Study Information for Parents

The Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR), a non-profit organization that advances the understanding and support of biomedical research, represents over 70 universities, research institutes and hospitals, voluntary health agencies, professional societies, and biotechnology corporations. Through outreach and service to the community, our organization strives to increase public awareness of the importance of biomedical research, the process by which research advances, and the applications and implications of that research.

In 2008, NWABR received a \$1.35M **Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA)** from the National Center for Research Resources at the NIH to build upon our internationally recognized Ethics in Science Program. Our program, "Collaborations to Understand Research and Ethics" (CURE), addresses a fundamental need in science education by preparing teachers to address research and bioethical issues with their students. The program provides teachers with a broad understanding of the context in which science is conducted in our society. It offers an opportunity to explore biomedical research from concept through research to clinical trials, and prepares teachers to address research and ethical issues with their students.

In July 2009, CURE hosted science educators from across the nation at a summer institute that focused on the process of biomedical research and its ethical considerations. Your student's teacher attended this institute and was able to experience unique instructional methods, share expertise with others, and use our curriculum (which meets the National Science Education Standards) to effectively integrate ethical and social dimensions of research.

The funding agency requires that one component of our evaluation plan must assess the impact of the project using rigorous methods, such as a well-matched comparison-group design, in order to see how well our program and materials work. Your student's teacher has been asked to introduce the CURE research study to students in September; provide instruction based on the CURE program and materials; administer a brief (15 minute) pre-test, post-test, or both; score student responses using the CURE rubric; and provide the scores to us for analysis. The pre and post tests are anonymous, and students will have the ability to opt out of taking them. This study will add to our understanding of best practices in science education, particularly in teaching and learning about biomedical research and ethics. Some teachers are in our control group – thus they are simply administering the pre and/or post-tests without teaching the curriculum.

We appreciate working with science educators to help students understand the process that generates new treatments and cures, and the ethical standards that help ensure that research is responsibly conducted. Please ask your student's teacher about our program and the support it provides. Our website is www.nwabr.org; we also have put specific information about the study as well as a downloadable copy of the entire 5-day curriculum at http://www.nwabr.org/education/esc_bioethics_101.html. If at any time you have questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

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