**Important Information about COVID-19 and Research Participation**

At SUNY New Paltz, our primary responsibility related to research is to protect the safety of our research participants.

COVID-19 refers to the Coronavirus that is being spread across people in our communities. We, the research team, need to provide you with important information about COVID-19, and to tell you about ways your study participation might change because of COVID-19 related risk.

If you are considering participating in an in-person study at this time or are currently enrolled in one, it is important that you consider the following information to determine if study participation is right for you at this time.

**How is COVID-19 spread?** COVID-19 is a respiratory virus spread by respiratory droplets, mainly from person-to-person. One way this can happen is between people who are in close contact with one another. It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object (such as a doorknob or counter surface) that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

**Can COVID-19 be prevented?** While it is not possible to guarantee prevention of COVID-19, current ways to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 include “social distancing” which is a practice to decrease the potential for direct exposure to others who may have been exposed to COVID-19, for example by avoiding large gatherings or refraining from shaking hands with others. Wearing protective face coverings/masks is also believed to reduce the transmission of the disease. It is important to understand that since study participation may include increased travel outside of your home and increased exposure to others it may increase your exposure to COVID-19. At this time there is no vaccination to prevent COVID-19 infection.

**What are the risks of COVID-19?** For many people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness.

**Who is most at risk?** Individuals over 60 and/or those with chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes, obesity, and lung disease have the highest rates of severe disease from the infection.

**How could your participation in this research change as a result of COVID-19?** There are several ways we try to minimize your risk. We will maintain a social distance of 6 feet whenever possible. All research staff will wear masks/face coverings. We also ask all of our participants to wear a mask, as well. We will provide a mask to you, if you don’t have one.

For faculty, staff, and students, current campus policies regarding health screenings and periodic testing must be followed. We ask every research participant if they have the symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in close contact with anyone who has or had COVID-19. Based on your responses, you may be asked to reschedule or cancel your appointment. We will be maintaining a contact tracing log and may be required to disclose the names and contact information of participants to health authorities. We will maintain confidentiality by not connecting this information with your research information or data you provide during the study.

Research staff will be cleaning and sanitizing research lab space and equipment. Hand sanitizer will be made available in each research lab.

During your research visits, we try to reduce the time you are exposed to other people as much as possible. For off-campus participants, if you have had any known close contact with a person confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days, or have tested positive or suspected to be positive with COVID-19, you are not permitted to come on campus. There may be last minute changes to how research procedures are performed [such as a change from an in-person visit to a telephone call] or cancellations of research tests or procedures to ensure your safety. It is even possible that all in-person research activities may be put on hold or stopped because of COVID-19.

The information related to risks of COVID-19 changes every day. The HREB will be monitoring these risks and deciding how these risks should change our research. If you have questions about COVID-19 and your participation in research, please talk to your study team.