Pathways for Using VCU Health Data in Research

This page outlines the different pathways for researchers looking to utilize VCU Health data for their projects. Please review the options below to determine the most appropriate process for your needs.

1. Exploring Data Availability (Feasibility)

If you're in the early stages and want to understand the potential data available for your research, consider these options:

- **Data Only Inquiry:** For initial assessments of data volume and characteristics.
  - **Cancer Research (Deep6):** A specific tool and process for exploring data related to cancer patients.
  - **Non-Cancer Research (VCU Informatics or TriNetX):** Platforms for investigating data for research projects not focused on cancer.
- **Chart Review:** A focused examination of individual patient records to gauge the suitability of the data for your study.
  - **Action:** Depending on your review needs, you may need to **Complete Prep to Research**.

2. Conducting Retrospective Data Studies

If your research involves looking back at existing patient information, here are the different data access points:

- **Data Concerning Deceased Individuals:** Specific procedures apply when working with information about decedents.
  - **Action:** You will need to **Complete Representations for Info on Decedents**.
- **Deidentified Data:** Data where all identifying information has been removed to protect patient privacy.
  - **Action:** You will need to **Complete Request for Deidentified Data form**.
- **Limited Data Sets or Identifiable Data:** Accessing data that may still contain some identifying information requires specific permissions.
  - **Action:** You will likely need to obtain a **Waiver of HIPAA Authorization**.
  - In some cases, data may be **Data deidentified after chart review**.

3. Recruiting Research Participants

If your study involves directly engaging with patients, the process involves:

- **Using Epic Best Practice Advisory (BPA)** or **Performing chart review to identify potential participants.**
  - **Action:** This step may require a **Complete Partial Waiver of**

Authorization to access necessary information for identification.
- **Enrolling patients into your study.**
  - **Action:** This requires obtaining a **Complete HIPAA Authorization** from the participant.

4. Study Enrollment

For the formal enrollment of participants in your research:
- **Action:** You will need to ensure a **Complete HIPAA Authorization** is obtained from each participant.

Important Note: HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations govern the use and disclosure of protected health information. Depending on the type of data you need and your research activities, you will likely need to complete specific forms and obtain necessary approvals to ensure compliance.

Next Steps: Please identify the category that best aligns with your research needs and follow the associated actions. If you have questions or need further clarification on any of these pathways, please contact the VCU Health research administration or compliance office.