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4 HPTN COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND PROTOCOL TEAMS

Committees and Working Groups

The HPTN Executive Committee (EC) has provided general guidelines for the composition of HPTN committees and working groups. Details are left to the individual groups, and membership of all groups should reflect the diversity of the Network, including representatives from Central Resources Network operational components, Clinical Trials Units (CTUs)/Clinical Research Sites (CRSs), and community representatives as well as scientists and researchers.

4.1 Scientific Committees

The Scientific Committees (SCs) develop and guide the scientific agenda of the HPTN. The SCs are:

- Adolescents at Risk
- Women at Risk
- Men who have Sex with Men
- Substance Users

Each SC is responsible for:

- Assessing research priorities in light of new ideas and research opportunities
- Identifying gaps in current HPTN research agenda
- Ensuring inclusion and coordination of assessments utilized in HPTN studies that related to the focus area or population for the scientific committee
- Reviewing relevant research concepts submitted to the HPTN
- Seeking collaboration across the scientific committees to advance the HPTN research agenda
- Assisting in dissemination of information regarding the HPTN Scientific Research Agenda
- Representing the HPTN at relevant scientific meetings and conferences

The SCs integrate HPTN and non-HPTN scientific expertise into the development of the research agenda established by the committees through the inclusion of leaders in their respective fields (some may not be affiliated with the HPTN) as group members.

The SC chair and co-chair attend EC meetings at least annually to report on activities of the committees and to discuss research priorities.

Membership

Each SC has a chair and co-chair, appointed by the EC Chair, who serves a minimum three year term (may be extended at the request of the EC Chair). The HPTN EC determines the composition of the committee within guidelines established by the EC. It is recommended that the SC committees have no more than 10 voting members. Non-voting membership in the SC includes liaisons to the Central Resources, Community Working Group (CWG) and Ethics Working Group (EWG).

4.2 Working Groups

The Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) WG, CWG and EWG are cross-cutting groups and provide their expertise to the Network as described below.

4.2.1 PrEP Working Group

The role of the PrEP WG is to provide scientific expertise, guidance and review of all concepts that involve PrEP. The membership of the PrEP WG is limited to three to four experts appointed by HPTN leadership.

4.2.2 Community Working Group

The Community Working Group (CWG) facilitates inclusion of representatives of the research community as partners in the HPTN research agenda. Community representatives and/or community staff participate in the CWG and on community educator conference calls, HPTN protocol teams, and other Network committees. In addition, once a protocol is approved for development, a protocol-specific CWG is typically formed.

The goals of the CWG are to:

- Assure that research conducted within the HPTN is done in partnership with the community by integrating community perspectives
- Develop community capacity at HPTN sites to participate in research collaboration
- Increase Network understanding of community collaboration in HIV prevention research
- Provide input in the science generation process

The goals of a study-specific CWG are to:

- Provide input into protocol development as needed, adapting sample consent forms for local use and developing other study-related materials
- Participate in protocol-specific training and regional community workshops
- Help to inform strategies for recruitment and retention, especially for harder-to-reach populations
- Assist in monitoring any emerging issues in the community while a study is on-going
- Facilitate the accurate dissemination of study results to the community

To meet these goals, the CWG and study-specific CWGs work to:

- Integrate participation of community members who represent diverse HIV study communities and their advocates into WGs, SCs, and protocol teams
- Promote understanding of community needs and issues among HPTN researchers and other Network members
- Inform and advise the EC on community-related issues of concern
- Provide leadership to CTU/CRS community program staff in addressing issues that cut across the culturally diverse populations, communities, and technical areas of the HPTN
- Support collaboration and partnership at the CTU/CRS, SC, WG, and Network levels
- Advise and advocate for Network efforts in research, evaluation, and training addressing community participation at all levels of HPTN research

Membership

The CWG Chair and Co-Chair are selected by the CWG and appointed by the EC Chair and serves a minimum three year term, renewable at the discretion of the EC Chair. The CWG Chair, CWG Co-Chair and LOC community program staff determine the composition of the CWG within guidelines established by the EC. This includes members both internal and external to the HPTN.

Standing membership in the Global HPTN CWG includes:

- Voting Members

- CWG Chair and Co-Chair (one each, US and non-US)
- Each HPTN CRS
 - 1 Community Advisory Board (CAB) Representative
 - 1 Community Educator
- Non-Voting Members
 - HPTN LOC Community Program and other staff
 - HPTN Principal Investigators
 - Division of AIDS (NIAID/NIH) Representative
 - External Advocate(s)
 - *Ad-hoc* External Scientific Advisor

The Global CWG typically meets at least quarterly via conference call and at least once annually in-person

Membership in a protocol-specific CWG includes:

- Voting Members
 - HPTN CWG Chair and Co-Chair
 - Representative from each CRS
 - 1 Community Advisory Board (CAB) Member
 - 1 Community Educator (CE)
- Non-Voting Members
 - HPTN LOC Community Program and other staff

Community working group representatives are appointed to different positions (community protocol team representative, Community Partners, CWG chair). The CWG may also vote on logos and study material layout.

Protocol-specific CWGs typically meet at least once a quarter via conference call.

4.2.3 Ethics Working Group

The goals of the EWG are to contribute to HPTN research by raising awareness of and engaging Network members in dialogue about ethical issues in HIV prevention research and to facilitate decision-making around ethical issues during the research process. The EWG membership represents a broad scope of ethical, scientific, research, and community expertise — internal and external to the HPTN and from all regions of the world.

The EWG's scope of work includes:

- Ensuring ethical input into and review of HPTN concepts and protocols by serving as non-voting members of the Science Review Committee (SRC), protocol teams and *ad hoc* resources to SCs
- Developing and maintaining an ethics guidance document for the conduct of HPTN studies and for publication

The EWG developed guidelines to enhance HPTN studies, [HIV Prevention Trials Ethics Guidance for Research](#), which, is posted on the HPTN website.

Membership

The Chair and the co-chair are appointed by the EC Chair. The EWG membership includes representatives from diverse fields and geographic regions, ethicists, social scientists, HPTN investigators, community representatives, and staff members from the LOC, SDMC, LC, [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#) (NIAID) and other collaborating [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) institutes.

The full EWG typically convenes via conference call at least quarterly and holds an in-person meeting at least annually. Subgroups of the EWG meet more frequently on an *ad hoc* basis.

4.3 HPTN Oversight and Operations Committees

The EC Chair recommends, and the EC approves, chair(s) and membership of the HPTN committees. Committee members serve for the duration of the cooperative agreement, and chairs serve three-year terms unless otherwise specified. Terms of committee chairs may be extended with the approval of the EC Chair. In addition to the EC, SCs, and WGs, five key standing Network oversight and operations committees include:

- Science Review Committee (SRC)
- Study Monitoring Committee (SMC)
- Manuscript Review Committee (MRC)
- Performance Evaluation Committee (PEC)
- Policies and Procedures Group (PPG)

4.3.1 Science Review Committee

The SRC ensures that study protocols are scientifically rigorous, accurate, consistent, complete and standardized to the extent possible relative to other HPTN protocols. The SRC will also review the protocol for operational feasibility, focusing on key issues such as site participation, infrastructure and capacity, relevance to the community and any ethical concerns.

Membership

The SRC membership for each protocol is composed of appointed and *ad hoc* members and includes representatives of relevant disciplines including prevention science, biostatistics, ethics, and clinical trial operations. The CTU/CRS investigators, EWG and community are also represented. Membership of the SRC, as proposed by the protocol team, is approved by the SRC Chair and is comprised of individuals who are not directly involved with the protocol.

Voting Members/ SRC conference call participants:

- SRC Chair (the HPTN Principal Investigator [PI] acts as designee in case of conflict of interest)
- SDMC Statistician (PI or designee)
- NIH Representative
- *Ad hoc* Scientific Reviewer (one or more voluntary experts knowledgeable in the research area)

Contributing Reviewers/from:

- SDMC Operations
- LOC
- LC
- CTU/CRS Investigator
- Site Coordinator
- CWG
- EWG

Note: the SRC may be observed by HPTN leadership.

The SRC convenes as needed. The SRC reviews are conducted via conference call with the voting members.

As noted above, voting members are not directly involved with the protocol under discussion. If a voting member does have a conflict of interest with the protocol under consideration (e.g., is a protocol team member), a designee votes in the member's place.

Ad hoc members may include:

- Representatives (ex officio) from NIH consortium institutes
- One or two research area experts external to the HPTN

Once an SRC is constituted for a protocol review, every attempt is made to maintain the same composition should the protocol need to be resubmitted for review.

A written review is provided to the team within 5 working days following the review.

Refer to MOP Section 15.5 for more details.

4.3.2 Study Monitoring Committee

The SMC is delegated by the EC to provide a review of the conduct of all HPTN studies. Active HPTN studies are typically reviewed by an SMC approximately every six months during implementation, including prior to Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) reviews, if applicable (see Section 15.8). The SDMC PI in collaboration with HPTN leadership will determine the need for and frequency of SMC reviews for each study. Observational and feasibility studies that are not being reviewed by the DSMB and others that may be determined by HPTN leadership to not require this frequency of review will have a modified review frequency and process. Studies that may take less than a year to complete might not be reviewed by the SMC at the discretion of the EC.

The SMC reviews study conduct, such as enrollment and retention, and, as applicable, aggregate or by arm safety data (adverse events, abnormal laboratory results, product holds and discontinuations) in a closed session. The review of aggregate safety data may be reviewed on the same time schedule as the scheduled SMC review of study conduct or may be more frequent, depending on the type of study (e.g., phase I/II studies of products not yet approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and may be conducted by a subset of the SMC. The frequency of review of safety data by the SMC will be determined by the Protocol Chair, DAIDS MO, and SMC chair.

Membership

The PI, or designee, of each of the Central Resource components of the Network, the LOC, SDMC, and LC, as well as the DAIDS PSP Chief are members of this committee.

The voting members are not directly involved with the protocol under discussion. If a voting member has a conflict of interest with the protocol under consideration (e.g., is a protocol team member), a designee participates in the member's place. Deliberations in the closed SMC reviews remain confidential. SMC open reports are shared with the protocol team and other relevant bodies. The SMC Chair, in collaboration with the protocol chair, determines the composition of the SMC for each protocol.

Members:

- SMC Chair (an SDMC Senior Statistician)

- LOC Representative (PI or Designee)
- LC Representative
- SDMC Statistician
- One or two *ad hoc* members (expert from within or outside of the HPTN knowledgeable in the research field) not connected to the study and with no conflict of interest. If the SMC will review safety data, at least one *ad hoc* member must be a physician.
- PSP Chief or Designee

Observers:

- DAIDS Medical Officer
- LC Deputy Director or Designee
- LC QA/QC Coordinator
- SDMC Associate Director and/or Senior Clinical Data Manager (SCDM)
- SDMC CDM
- LOC Director
- LOC CRM
- Representative(s) from other collaborating NIH institutes

A schedule of routine SMC reviews (based on the phase and need of the study) is established in advance to maximize availability of voting members for initial and subsequent reviews. However, members may appoint designees from their organizations, as needed, to ensure a quorum for each review. A SMC quorum is defined as the SMC Chair and at least three (3) other members. A SMC review call can only be scheduled if this minimum requirement is met. In exceptional situations, the SMC Chair may convene a call without the required quorum, or request that a review be carried out in his/her absence and identify a designee to serve as Chair in his/her stead.

Once a SMC is constituted for a study, every attempt is made to maintain the same membership throughout the study.

4.3.3 Manuscript Review Committee

The primary responsibility of the MRC is to ensure that abstracts, posters, presentations, and manuscripts that contain data or statistically related content from HPTN studies are developed, reviewed and endorsed, according to the HPTN Publications Policy (Section 21) prior to submission for publication. Reviews are conducted mainly via email with written feedback provided to the submitting author(s).

Membership

Members of the MRC include:

- HPTN Leadership (primary abstract/manuscript and as necessary)
- SDMC PI
- LOC representative
- Science reviewers
- LC representative

Further details of the MRC review process are found in the HPTN Publications Policy (Section 21).

4.3.4 Performance Evaluation Committee

The PEC is responsible for overseeing a continuous, comprehensive evaluation of the HPTN (see Section 19 for more information about the Network evaluation). The PEC designs and directs implementation and reporting of the internal evaluation of the HPTN. This includes assessing performance of the CTUs/CRSs as well as key organizations and entities that are also part of the HPTN (e.g., LOC, SDMC, LC and protocol teams).

The goal of the evaluation is to provide data to assist in leadership decisions about changes necessary to improve HPTN functioning. In regard to the CTUs/CRSs, the primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide data to determine if the sites are contributing effectively to the protocols that they have undertaken and to elicit corrective action, if necessary, so that all sites are functioning at peak performance level.

Membership

The membership of the PEC includes:

- PEC Chair
- SDMC Associate Director
- LC representative
- LOC representative
- LOC Evaluation Coordinator
- CTU/CRS PI
- CTU/CRS Study Coordinator
- LOC Community Program representative
- DAIDS/PSP representatives
- Community representative

An LOC staff member serves as an Evaluation Coordinator and is responsible for compilation, production, and distribution of evaluation results as well as facilitation of the work of the PEC.

The PEC convenes routinely by conference call. A quantitative evaluation report is produced after May 31 each year and is submitted to the EC for review and action to NIAID prior to July 1. In addition, a qualitative survey may be produced to facilitate improved performance of committees and groups. Results of the evaluations are also sent directly to EC, chairs of the WGs, Network committees and protocol teams, CTU/CRS PIs, and PIs of the LOC, SDMC, and LC.

4.3.5 Policy and Procedures Group

The PPG, with membership from the LOC, SDMC, LC and DAIDS, is an oversight and operations committee tasked with developing and maintaining the HPTN Manual of Operations (MOP).

4.4 Protocol Teams

Protocol teams assume primary responsibility for scientific and operational leadership in the development, implementation, and day-to-day oversight of HPTN studies and dissemination of their results.

4.4.1 Membership

The Protocol Chair identifies protocol team members (except for those positions assigned by the LOC, SDMC, LC, and NIH). Membership of each protocol team will vary according to the protocol, but membership should include:

- Protocol Chair
- PI or a designated investigator from each participating CTU/CRS
- Community representative(s) (sites and LOC)
- LOC CRM
- SDMC lead statistician
- SDMC CDM
- LC QAQC Coordinator
- LC Representative (typically a virologist/faculty member)
- DAIDS Medical and/or Program Officer
- NIAID collaborating institute representative (if applicable)
- DAIDS Pharmacist (if applicable)
- Pharmaceutical or industry representative (if applicable)
- EWG representative

Additional members, as required for a specific protocol, may include a pharmacologist, virologist, behavioral scientist, immunologist, etc.

4.4.2 Protocol Chair Selection

Scientific priorities are decided by the HPTN EC. Concepts addressing these priorities are either generated centrally by the HPTN leadership or by investigators and scientific committees (see section 9.1.1). For the concepts developed centrally, the protocol chair for approved concepts is selected by soliciting nominations for this leadership position. For the concepts developed by investigators or by the scientific committees, the concept teams can nominate the chair. Nomination and selection as a chair does not imply that the affiliated site (if any) will be selected for the study. Final approval as protocol chair is made by the HPTN EC.

4.4.3 Protocol Chair Responsibilities

The Protocol Chair will provide scientific leadership during the development, implementation, and reporting of the study and will assume responsibility for completion of protocol team responsibilities within the projected budget and timeline. In some instances studies will identify a co-chair to whom the chair may delegate some specific areas of responsibility, but the ultimate responsibility for execution of the study and final decision-making authority rests with the designated chair.

Because of the time commitments necessary to successfully implement and oversee a protocol, **investigators cannot simultaneously chair or co-chair more than two HPTN studies.**

Protocol Chairs will need to familiarize themselves with the HPTN processes and adhere to them. An [agreement](#) outlining responsibilities will be provided to protocol chair(s), who will be required to sign it.

Protocol team business is planned and managed by the Protocol Chair, in consultation and with the support of the LOC CRM and other core team members. Specifics of protocol team management vary according to the type of study (Phase I, II, III, research area, etc.), the number and location of sites involved, and individual leadership and management approaches.

In addition to duties as a protocol team member, the Protocol Chair and Co-Chair(s) are responsible for:

- Providing overall leadership to ensure that the protocol adheres to the projected budget and is completed by the projected timeline

- Working with the Central Resource partners, to provide detailed projections to the HPTN Leadership of the resources required to conduct the study, including site-specific study costs as well as costs associated with study drug and any potential outside contractors or vendors, where applicable
- Facilitating final decision making within the protocol team to achieve agreement on scientific or operational issues brought before it; if agreement cannot be reached, referring the issue to the SC for consideration
- Participating as a member of the Clinical Management Committee
- Together with the lead protocol statistician, reporting on the status of the study at open sessions of the DSMB
- Coordinating the establishment and dissolution of working groups as necessary to achieve efficiency in the development, implementation, and reporting of the study
- Overseeing the establishment of writing teams during manuscript preparation (designates writing team members, reviews schedules, monitors progress, helps prioritize analysis, communicates publication plans, responds to the MRC review, and advocates for additional resources as required)
- Ensuring review and approval of all study related manuscripts, abstracts and presentations.
- Providing status updates to HPTN leadership, as needed

The Protocol Chair(s) will act as a liaison between the team and the:

- SC, EC, and its standing committees with responsibilities for protocol oversight (SRC, SMC, MRC, and PEC)
- LOC and DAIDS to facilitate development, review, approval, and implementation of the protocol in accordance with all applicable clinical trials requirements with available resources
- LC in the development of the protocol design and its implementation, particularly regarding assay evaluation, protocol training and testing as needed, development and review of study-specific laboratory procedures, and establishment of quality assurance guidelines
- SDMC in the design, development, implementation, and reporting of the study

In addition, the protocol chair and team have the responsibilities outlined in the next section.

4.4.4 Protocol Team Responsibilities

The LOC CRM provides technical and operational support throughout the process. Although individual protocol team members have different roles in fulfilling specific protocol team responsibilities (see table below), all members are expected to provide scientific, operational, or site-specific input, as appropriate, to protocol team activities. Protocol team responsibilities include:

Roles of Key Protocol Team Members	
Team Member	Primary Roles and Responsibilities
Protocol Chair (see Section 4.4.3 for further details of chair responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership to ensure that the protocol adheres to the projected budget and is completed by the projected timeline • Lead protocol team meetings and calls • Lead protocol development with LOC representative • Establish subcommittees and working groups of protocol team to complete specific activities, as needed • Monitor study implementation across sites • Participate in SMC and DSMB meetings, if applicable • Develop plan for and lead writing of manuscripts and dissemination of study results
Site Investigators (see Section 3.4.1.3 for further details of investigator responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide site-informed input into protocol development • Provide detailed site estimates of costs for study implementation • Submit protocol and other required study documents to Institution Review Boards/Ethics Committees (IRB/ECs) and relevant regulatory authorities, if necessary • Review and comment on SSP Manuals and data collection forms • Manage study implementation at sites • Participate in manuscript development
Community Representative(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide perspective of community and potential participants; facilitate communication with site CAB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - during development of protocol and informed consent - during study conduct, bringing community concerns and issues to the attention of the protocol team - during manuscript development • Work with protocol team and CABs to develop and implement plans for dissemination of study results to the community, as needed
LOC CRM (see Section 3.1.1 for further details of LOC responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Protocol Chair, provide scientific and operational input to the protocol, coordinate and lead development of protocol • Organize and document protocol team conference calls and meetings • Review study budget with sites and LOC financial staff • Submit protocol for required HPTN and DAIDS reviews (SRC, PSRC, Regulatory, Medical Officer) and manage response/revision process • Develop and produce SSP Manual with input from SDMC, LC and other team members • Provide onsite study-specific training with SDMC and LC counterparts and coordinate development of training plan and materials to provide onsite training, as needed • Provide technical assistance and oversight to CTUs/CRSs during study conduct, enabling the sites to respond to problems and issues that arise during implementation of studies and dissemination of findings • Track site progress on activation requirements and review-related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Roles of Key Protocol Team Members	
Team Member	Primary Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the performance of CTUs/CRSs and report results to the PEC, EC, and DAIDS Summarize SRC and SMC reviews and distribute as appropriate Collaborate with DAIDS Pharmaceutical Affairs Branch (PAB) and the pharmaceutical companies to coordinate the acquisition and distribution of study drug Collaborate with SDMC to develop Case Report Forms (CRFs) and test them in the field before implementation Collaborate with LC to enable CTUs/CRSs to meet proficiency requirements Coordinate and track site activation requirements
SDMC Lead Statistician (see Section 3.2.1 for further details of SDMC responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide design, statistical and scientific input during protocol development and throughout the conduct of the study Develop statistical components of the protocol Develop randomization and treatment allocation scheme, if needed Conduct data analyses and generate SMC and DSMB reports Provide ongoing support for statistical questions Participate in manuscript preparation
SDMC CDM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate in development of protocol Collaborate in development and production of SSP manual, with primary responsibility for data management, reporting and randomization sections Lead the development of data collection instruments (e.g., CRFs, computer-based questionnaires) and instructions Collaborate with CRM to test CRFs and operations in the field before training and implementation Collaborate with CRM on review of site SOPs related to data management prior to activation Collaborate with CRM on study drug packaging and distribution as it relates to randomization and data collection Conduct data management and data collection instrument (e.g., CRF) training at sites Develop plan for and provide regular reports to protocol team and CTUs/CRSs (enrollment, retention, adherence, specimen storage, data management quality) Coordinate development and production of SMC and DSMB reports Provide support for data collection and management Collaborate with CRM to provide support for operational matters that may influence study data Assess the data management quality of CTUs/CRSs and report results to protocol team Conduct data management site visits as needed Collaborate with LC on quality assurance testing of specimens Facilitate closeout of data collection and cleaning

Roles of Key Protocol Team Members	
Team Member	Primary Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor publication activity and facilitate as needed
LC QA/QC Coordinator (see Section 3.3.2 for further details of LC responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define appropriate laboratory testing methods and materials • Collaborate in development and production of SSP manuals, with primary responsibility for laboratory sections • Provide training for CTU/CRS laboratories in protocol-specified laboratory tests, as needed • Coordinate and perform (as applicable) protocol-specified laboratory testing • Monitor technical quality of protocol test results; provide assistance to local laboratories, as needed • Provide laboratory expertise in CRF development • Collaborate with CRM to enable CTUs/CRSs to meet proficiency requirements • Provide support to the study team as laboratory issues arise during implementation of the protocol • Participate in manuscript development
LC Representative (e.g., virologist, immunologist, pharmacologist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide scientific input into protocol development • Provide input on laboratory-related issues of the protocol and development of the laboratory section of the protocol • Define appropriate laboratory testing methods and materials and sub-studies, as necessary • Monitor technical quality of specialized protocol test results • Provide assistance to local laboratories, as needed, for specialized tests • Participate in manuscript development
DAIDS Medical Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate fully in protocol team discussions and decisions • Facilitate communication between protocol team and DAIDS groups and staff • Provide timely Medical Officer review • Provide oversight of safety monitoring
DAIDS Pharmacist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary responsibility for the pharmacy section of the SSP Manual • Advise protocol team on all product-related issues; consult on available dosage forms and placebos • Interact with pharmaceutical companies to ensure product supply • Provide and monitor timely product shipment to study sites • Monitor drug supply, expiration dates, and budgets for drug, where necessary

4.4.6 Relationship of HPTN Executive Committee and Protocol Team

The EC monitors each HPTN protocol team with regard to protocol development, implementation, analysis, and reporting. This oversight is accomplished through the SC, the SMC, the PEC, and the MRC by a mixture of formal review of key documents produced by the protocol teams (study protocol, protocol summaries, open reports to the DSMB, and primary and secondary manuscripts) as well as review of reports prepared by the SC, the SDMC, the PEC, and the LOC.

In addition to oversight provided by the SMC or DSMB and the standing and *ad hoc* committees, routine EC oversight includes:

- Evaluation of study progress in relation to key implementation benchmarks established by the PEC and information from the protocol teams and SDMC (e.g., timeliness of enrollment and follow-up targets, routine reports to the DSMB, and progress in data analysis and reporting). The EC identifies and communicates recommended actions on delayed protocols and unexpected problems in protocol implementation
- Assistance to DAIDS in determining the need for additional resources, for example, because of unexpected costs associated with planned study procedures or in order to support ancillary studies endorsed by the protocol teams
- Adjudication of conflicts that cannot be resolved within the protocol teams and/or the relevant SC. If all reasonable attempts to adjudicate conflicts or address problems with the protocol team and the SC fail, the EC may direct that the protocol team membership or its leadership be modified

4.4.7 Conflict Resolution

Conflicts within the HPTN are handled by referring the issue in dispute to the next level of the HPTN organizational structure.

4.4.7.1 Conflicts within Protocol Teams

- If a conflict arises within a protocol team and cannot be resolved between the members involved, the issue is referred to the Protocol Chair
- If the issue cannot be resolved, it is referred to HPTN Leadership

4.4.7.2 Conflicts between HPTN Investigators and HPTN Committees

If an HPTN investigator is not satisfied with a decision of an HPTN committee (SRC, SMC) or a finding of the PEC, and the issue cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation with the chair of that committee, the investigator or the committee chair may refer the issue to the EC.