

# Streamlining Ethics Review in Canada

A Matter of Balance  
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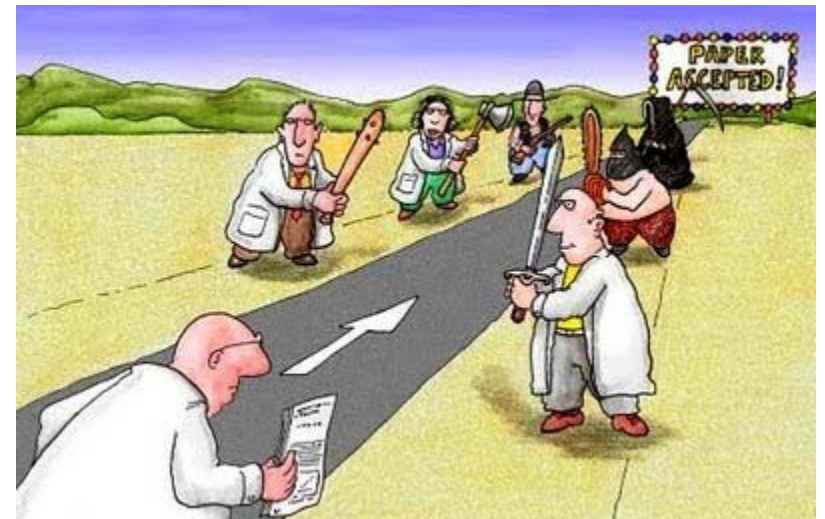
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# Session Objectives

- Provide context to inform discussion
  - Background, Issues and hurdles
  - Considerations going forward
- Your Dialogue: What can be done to streamline ethics review to help position Canada
- Identify top 3-4 ideas that can be worked on to advance a more integrated approach nationally

# Streamlining Ethics Review: Why bother?

- Ensure protection of the research participants/subjects
- Make Canadian rigor of ethics review a competitive asset, not a barrier to research



# What are the issues?



Process efficiency



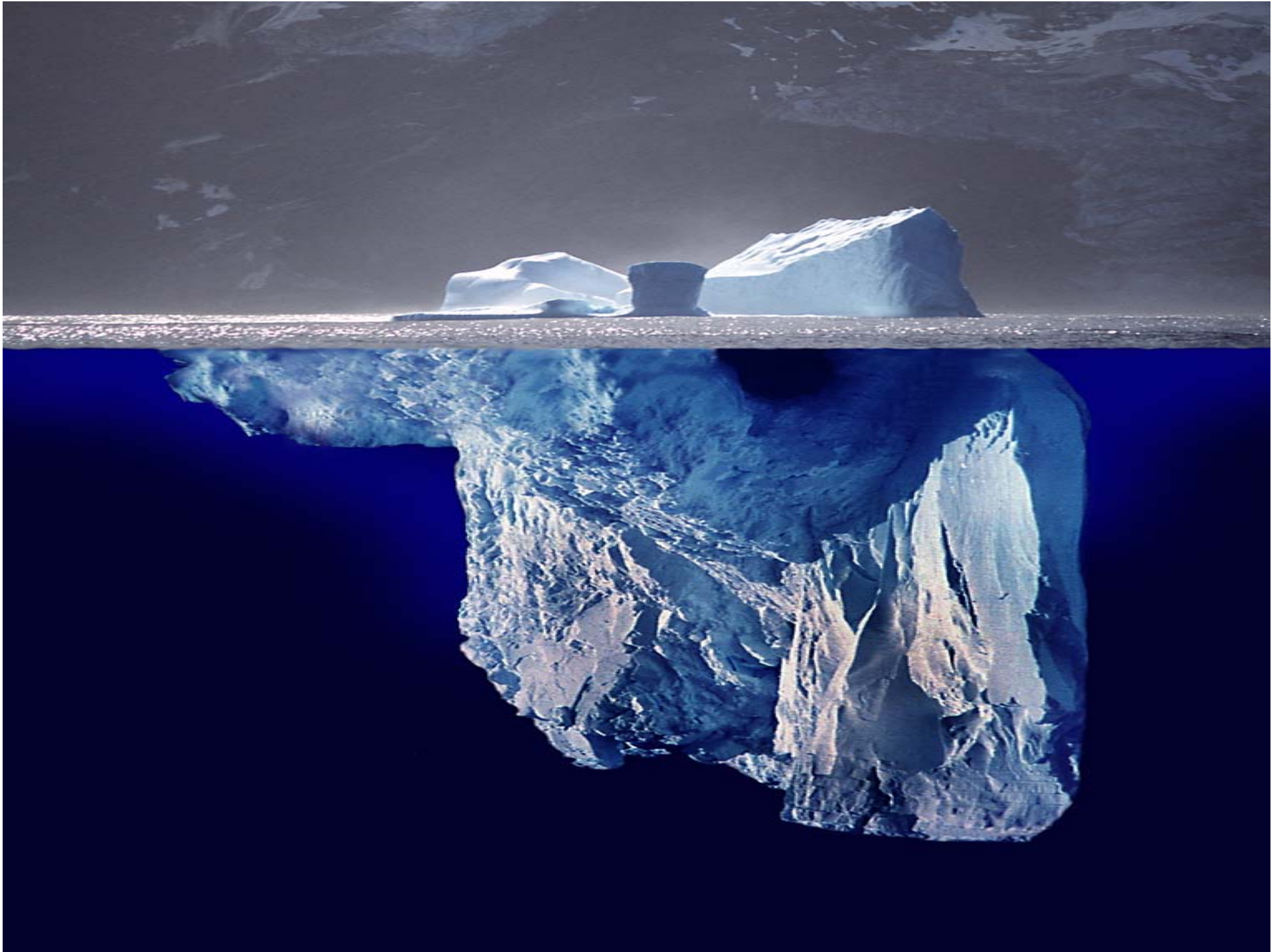
National, regional & local systems



REB resources



Alignment of ethics initiatives on streamlining





# Process Efficiency Issues



- Confusion re types of approvals needed and how to navigate & sequence through “the maze” (REB review, scientific review, administrative approvals)
- Clarity of REB communications about processes (e.g., protocol deviations, SAE reporting)
- Multiple local reviews for multi-centre studies

# National and Regional Perspective Issues



- Responsibility at individual site level vs. a REB system perspective within a province or nationally
- Lack of system metrics
- Jurisdictional differences across the country:
  - Legislation and regulations
  - Clinical research is tied to health services which are provincially controlled
- Inter-Organizational Barriers to Collaboration
  - Cultural differences
  - Competition (e.g., for funding, faculty, trainees)
  - Turf protection and historical enmity
- Variability in interpretation of the TCPS leading to mistrust
- Principle of independent review vs. depending on another REB's review

# REB Resource Hurdles



- Voluntary nature of the member role
- Incentive structures that don't reward REB service
- REB training needs



But things are moving in the right direction...



- Impetus: Global changes in the research & innovation landscape
- Proactive REBs, Institutions, Industry and Governments
- A number of streamlining initiatives in Canada (AB, BC, NL, NS, ON, SK)

# Some Review Model Options



- Participatory reviews (informal agreed mutual sharing of forms, information)
  - ? how to maintain voluntary mutual sharing ?
- Dual reviews (formal agreement for 1<sup>st</sup> full review & 2<sup>nd</sup> review for local considerations only)
  - ? more efficient than multiple participatory reviews ?
- Delegated reviews (one REB review accepted without further review by other REBs)
  - ? how to assure expertise ?
- Central REB reviews
  - ? how to represent diverse cultural or religious values and practices ?

# Things to consider moving forward:



- Recognize complex change takes much time, effort, and careful planning
- Expect obstacles – turf politics, conflicting visions, differing styles & approaches
- Use allies and champions
- Communication & evaluation expertise from the beginning
- Clarity on vision and goals, accountabilities

# Striking A Balance



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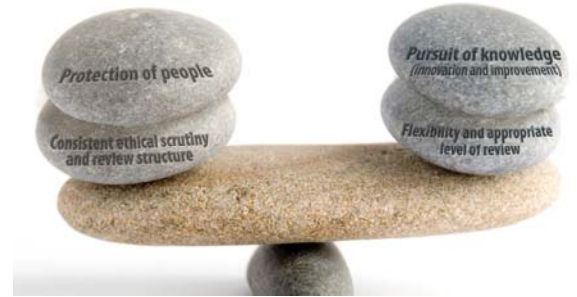
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# Balancing Principles



- Speed with quality in the review process
- Focus on key efficiencies, not minor variation
- Different jurisdictions require different change incentives – top down, bottom up, or both
- Applicable guidelines and norms, with flexibility for additional, institution-specific standards
- Aim for metrics that support system level management while respecting institutional needs

# Questions



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