Paying Study Participants via Debit Cards

Policy 6-13.0 (subsection “payment using MUSC ClinCard Debit Card)

Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the issuance, accounting and record keeping of study participant fees that are paid via a debit card. The Clincard is a reloadable, prepaid card that is available for new research studies. It offers an automated method to pay study participants as opposed to issuing and recording paper checks, gift cards and/or petty cash. The MUSC ClinCard Program is managed and administered jointly by the Office of Clinical Research and the Controller’s Office.

General Guidelines

Once study teams/departments have procured the cards from AP, they are responsible for monitoring and safeguarding the inventory of assigned cards.

Study teams will utilize the web-based ClinCard portal to assign a ClinCard to a study participant, and pay participants in accordance with the IRB approved informed consent form.

A monthly reconciliation for the account balances will be completed by AP, in addition to maintaining an up-to-date log for card inventory. The cards shall remain locked in a safe at all times in the Controller’s Office.

Study participant identification information, such as name, address, date-of-birth and social security number, should be maintained by the departments at all times.

Procedures

1. Departments that choose to pay their study participants via the ClinCards need to first be sure that this option is included in the IRB application. Requests for cards and funding should be completed through the Study Setup request (in SPARCRequest®). Departments should complete all required information within SPARCRequest® including the study name, complete UDAK information, department name and the name of the individual to pick up the card during this request. Once the setup request is completed, departments should contact Accounts Payable (AP), either by phone or email, to schedule pick up (location - Harborview Towers – Room 506T). Departments should categorize transactions by study participant payment, or travel reimbursement (mileage only) to ensure amounts are properly recorded.

2. AP will regularly (weekly) login to the ClinCard portal to monitor activity, account balances and card inventory. The MUSC ClinCard Program Manager and AP should communicate continuously on account balances and inventory levels to avoid potential deficits.

3. At the end of each month, AP will record two journal entries to reflect the month’s activity. One entry will be to bill the department(s) for any cards issued and a separate entry to record the
amount of funds that were loaded onto the cards, including the requisite load fees. AP will forward a template of these entries to Accounting Services, who will enter these directly in Smartstream.

4. Participant identification information should be loaded into the ClinCard portal to populate Forms 1099-MISC. At the end of each year, AP will use this information to report to the IRS. In the event of further IRS inquiry, departments should provide copies of this information to AP to comply with federal regulations. Tax-related documents, such as Form W-9, should be retained for up to 7 years.