Ethics

There are inherent risks and harms in research involving human subjects. We are following a rigorous plan to mitigate these risks and protect the privacy of individuals, and to ensure the data remains confidential and private:

Survey:

- Each individual who meets the study criteria will be assigned a unique identifier according to the following format: birth year, gender identity and the last two letters in client's last name.

- The survey tool only collects descriptive, non-identifiable demographic information.

- Only information available on the individual's chart/file will be included in the study.

- Questions can be left unanswered on the survey. Assumptions on demographic or housing situation should not be made, and only available charted information should be recorded.

Data Management:

- The unique identifier codes are needed to manage any duplications. The linkage will be done using a statistical software (SPSS). Once duplicates are removed, the unique identifiers will be replaced with a random, meaningless identifier.

- Only the Acadia research team will have access to the data survey tools and data sets.

- Lime Survey will be used for the electronic version of the survey. This is approved for use by Acadia University and the data/servers are located in Canada.

- The data sets will be saved on an encrypted file on a password protected computer (double lock) using Acadia University endorsed software and network endorsed by Acadia University (Office365).

- Research records will be stored in a secure location for the designated 5 years post study completion (as required by Acadia University). At the end of the retention period, electronic information will be permanently erased by the PI in collaboration with Acadia University's IT department.

Reporting:

- Dissemination of research findings on a vulnerable population carries a risk of stigmatizing the population which could feed into stigma and discrimination already experienced by the population.

- Participants' organizations will not be reported, but generalized to sector. For example, health, non-profit organizations, justice.

- Personal health information abstracted from the charts (e.g., housing status, number of children) will be summarized and shared only in aggregate form.

- We will suppress categories of variables that have fewer than five individuals.