Rebecca Pentz, PhD, professor of research ethics in Emory’s Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology, has been appointed to serve on an external scientific panel to provide input to the National Institute of Health’s new genotype tissue-expression project.

The NIH recently announced awards to support the initiative, which is designed to understand how genetic variation may control gene activity and its relationship to disease. Launched as a pilot phase, the Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) project will create a resource for researchers to study inherited susceptibility to illness and will establish a tissue bank for future biological studies.

The GTEx pilot project comprises three biospecimen source sites, and a laboratory data analysis and coordinating center. Led by the National Cancer Institute’s cancer Human Biobank (caHUB), http://cahub.cancer.gov/ initiative, the biospecimen source sites will recruit donors and collect the tissues. Pentz joins other faculty from medical centers such as Yale University School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute among others.

“As external advisors to the project, our role is provide both scientific and ethical advice about GTEx projects,” said Pentz. An ethical study of donation and consent is embedded in this project.