Certificates of Confidentiality are an important tool to protect the privacy of research study participants.

Certificates of Confidentiality are issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to protect identifiable research information from forced disclosure. They allow the investigator and others who have access to research records to refuse to disclose identifying information on research participants in any civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceeding, whether at the federal, state, or local level. By protecting researchers and institutions from being compelled to disclose information that would identify research subjects, Certificates of Confidentiality help achieve the research objectives and promote participation in studies by helping assure confidentiality and privacy to participants.

Information about how to apply for a Certificate of Confidentiality can be found at:

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/coc/