



March 27, 2025

As requested by the Oregon Health Authority and the Community Review Board, OHSU is submitting the following public comment containing OHSU's statement on the Oregon National Primate Research Center.



OHSU statement on PCRM ad campaign

Local ad campaign makes false claims about lifesaving research at OHSU, ONPRC

The anti-animal research group Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine recently launched an ad campaign in the Portland-metro area that makes false claims about the lifesaving research and compassionate, leading-edge veterinary care taking place at Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon's public academic health center, and its Oregon National Primate Research Center.

In alignment with our public mission to improve the health and well-being of the people of Oregon and beyond, we want the public to know the following facts about research in animal models at OHSU and its primate research center.

Purpose and Values

OHSU strongly supports what data confirm: Knowledge gained through biomedical research in relevant animal models is *essential* to developing new ways to identify, prevent, treat or eradicate debilitating diseases and to improve human and animal health. OHSU's views on this topic reflect those of other academic health centers, universities, physicians and scientists throughout the world, as well as grateful patients and families who've benefited from these advances.

Research in animal models at OHSU, and other world-class universities and institutes, leading to life-saving medical discoveries, including:

- Vaccines for COVID-19, polio, smallpox, mumps and measles
- A vaccine platform for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and West Nile virus
- New treatments for infertility, heart disease and diabetes
- Breakthroughs in Parkinson's disease, blindness, stroke and depression

OHSU looks forward to a time when nonanimal research methods are capable of faithfully modeling the complexity of a living system; however, we are many years away from realizing that goal.

The global scientific community doesn't completely understand how cells, tissues and organs integrate in biological systems, and nonanimal research models currently are incapable of providing information necessary for accurate interpretation.

OHSU continually monitors and evaluates new methods and technology as alternatives to animal studies in our programs and is committed to adopting these techniques as soon as they are validated scientifically.

Compassionate, leading-edge veterinary care

At the Oregon National Primate Research Center, or ONPRC, we employ hundreds of dedicated staff committed to providing humane, respectful treatment and the best possible veterinary care to our nearly 5,000 primates.

Dozens of highly trained veterinarians, technicians and support personnel engage with these animals daily to ensure their ongoing safety, enrichment, health and well-being, and rapidly respond to any health issues. Many staff members develop strong bonds with the animals entrusted to their care; consequently, any injuries or unexpected deaths are devastating for all involved.

Animal care and housing are directed by licensed veterinarians, many of whom are Diplomates of the [American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine](#), a recognized specialty of distinction within the veterinary medical profession. Technicians who care for laboratory animals can receive specialized training and certification through the [American Association for Laboratory Animal Science](#), the [Laboratory Animal Management Association](#), and other organizations involved in laboratory animal science.

Federal oversight, international accreditation and transparency

The rules, regulations and policies governing animal research benefit the animals by setting high standards of care, and they benefit science and the future of human health by assuring that animal research yields sound results. OHSU recognizes that good science depends on healthy animals.

OHSU supports and adheres to all state and federal policies and guidelines concerning research with animals, including:

- [Oregon House Bill 2904](#), which requires the ONPRC to publish on its [public website](#): how many nonhuman primates were born, purchased and sold; how many were injured or died in a manner that resulted in an animal welfare citation by the United States Department of Agriculture; documentation of accreditation status; links to publicly accessible websites that include descriptions of research using nonhuman primates; the amount of money awarded to the center in the previous fiscal year.
- [Animal Welfare Act](#), which establishes high standards for the care and treatment of laboratory animals.
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), which inspects all facilities covered under the Animal Welfare Act. The USDA also requires research institutions to provide annual reports, summarizing research animal use and verifying compliance.
- [Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#) is mandated by The [Health Research Extension Act](#) of 1985. It requires scientists to adhere to the [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#) and federal guidelines pertaining to the humane care of research animals.
- The **National Institutes of Health** makes periodic site visits while reviewing grants that support individual projects or facilities. If an institution fails to comply with the Animal Welfare Act or NIH

guidelines, the government may revoke federal grants or contracts awarded for its research.

To further ensure our programs are taking extra steps to achieve excellence in animal care and use, OHSU voluntarily participates in [AAALAC, International's accreditation process](#) -- a rigorous review of animals; facilities; equipment; professional, technical and administrative support; and policies and programs for institutional responsibilities, animal husbandry and veterinary care.

The Marquam Hill Campus has been continuously accredited for more than 51 years, and the Oregon National Primate Research Center has been continuously accredited for more than 40 years.

USDA inspectors conduct random, unannounced visits to the primate center at least once yearly to review the animals, facilities, food supply, medications and records. Their inspection reports, once finalized, are publicly available on the USDA website, and the primate center [website](#).

At OHSU, we provide a wide variety of opportunities for students and others to learn about our scientific research and our animal care programs. For example, scientists and animal care professionals speak with visitors to Oregon National Primate Center at OHSU, serve as mentors for teachers and students, visit area classrooms, and interact with the public at special events on our campus and in the wider community.

Additionally, more than 4,000 people visit the primate center annually, including: elementary, middle school and high school students; undergraduate and graduate student groups; civic groups and other organizations; and, members of the public.

Tours are designed to accommodate the special interests of each group. Depending on group size and interest, tours may feature an interactive presentation about scientific methods and current center research projects, a visit to the outdoor corrals to observe the center's rhesus and Japanese macaque breeding colonies, scientists discussing their research, and/or a tour of laboratory spaces.

OHSU policies and protocols

OHSU's own strict policies about research in animals complement federal laws and regulations that protect animals in research.

At OHSU, animal studies are only conducted when other nonanimal research methods, such as laboratory-based cell culture, simulation, gene chips or computer modeling, are scientifically inadequate and/or when experimental designs are too dangerous for human participants.

Before OHSU conducts any research with animals, the research must be approved for scientific value and justification of the need for animals and species by peer review.

Only after a study is deemed to be of scientific value is it possible to request approval from OHSU's two [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees \(West Campus IACUC and Marquam Hill Campus IACUC\)](#). Each IACUC comprises, at a minimum, 15 to 20 members, including a veterinarian, practicing scientists, an individual whose primary expertise is nonscientific (ethicist, lawyer, clergy) and a community representative not affiliated with OHSU. Additional committee members provide expertise in specific areas of research. The IACUCs are required under federal law and guidelines

This rigorous review process evaluates factors such as details of the study design, steps taken in the study design to minimize pain and distress, and documentation of appropriate training of all study staff.

Scientists also must demonstrate that the proposed study does not unnecessarily duplicate research previously conducted and must describe in detail the sources used to reach that conclusion.

Veterinarians specially trained to care for research animals participate in the review process. If the IACUC determines that animals are necessary to address a research question, OHSU ensures the study uses the fewest number of animals possible and emphasizes procedures that minimize discomfort and stress.

As required by the Animal Welfare Act and other regulations and guidelines, the primate center and Marquam Hill Campus each have an attending veterinarian who has the authority to oversee the health

and well-being of the animals. This includes the provision of appropriate clinical care and the relief of discomfort consistent with professionally accepted standards of veterinary practice.

Accountability

Any serious issues or incidents involving research animals are immediately reported to OHSU's Research Integrity Office, which investigates and reports to [OHSU's Institutional Official and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#), who then ensures appropriate measures are taken to prevent a recurrence.

OHSU promptly reports serious issues or incidents to the NIH's [Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare](#), whose highly trained veterinary staff thoroughly review OHSU's mitigation response to determine whether it is complete and appropriate, thereby ensuring that OHSU has done everything possible to minimize the possibility of recurrence.

While human error and the unpredictable behavior of undomesticated animals are impossible to completely eliminate, OHSU strives to do everything in its power to employ best practices in engineering, training and supervision to protect against them.

OHSU is committed to openness and publishes all USDA reports on its public website, as soon as they are available.

Sample contributions to human and animal health

- A compound that successfully promotes the rebuilding of the protective sheath around nerve cells that is damaged in conditions such as multiple sclerosis
- Identification of a gene that could provide a new target for developing medication to prevent and treat alcoholism
- New methods of vaccine development for HIV, tuberculosis, West Nile Virus, SARS-CoV2, and other infectious diseases
- Exploring the reasons that antivirals do not cure people infected with HIV
- Exploring novel treatments for HIV, Yellow Fever, and COVID-19
- Treatment for an infection that can result in chronic lung ailments and brain injury in pre-term infants
- Understanding of the effects of aging on neurological immunological and reproductive functions (and how these are related)
- A method of protecting fertility in people who receive chemotherapy or radiation therapy as treatment for disease
- A safer contraception method
- Improved understanding of brain injury and repair
- Improved baby formula to promote healthy eye development in newborns
- Gene therapy for people who are carriers of mitochondrial defects
- Novel gene therapy treatments for individuals with mutations that cause blindness and deafness
- A method for accessing embryonic stem cells without the destruction of the fertilized egg
- Treatments for infertility

- Clinical trials using vitamin C to protect against lung damage in infants whose mothers smoke during pregnancy
- Identifying the effects of consuming a high-fat diet during pregnancy has on the development of obesity and/or Type II diabetes in the next generation.
- Novel treatments for endometriosis

A sampling of OHSU research discoveries that impact human health (available on [OHSU News](#))

- [OHSU research offers clues for potential widespread HIV cure in people](#)
- [OHSU researchers assemble comprehensive atlas of human gene mutations](#)
- [NIH awards OHSU \\$2.7M grant to advance human health through frozen research animal embryos](#)
- [Lab-made antibodies offer potential cure for yellow fever](#)
- [Ending THC use may reverse negative impacts on male fertility](#)
- [OHSU confirms first nonhuman primate model of Usher syndrome](#)
- [OHSU physician-scientist pioneers research to better understand maternal sleep apnea](#)
- [Driven by OHSU research, FDA approves new drug to prevent hearing loss in children with cancer](#)
- [Potential drug takes aim at emerging Chikungunya virus](#)
- [Nanotechnology may improve gene therapy for blindness](#)
- [Study to explore why COVID can also lead to obesity, diabetes](#)
- [One-time gene therapy injection could provide HIV treatment that may last a lifetime](#)
- [Nanoparticle technology could be new, non-invasive treatment for endometriosis](#)
- [Fecal implants drive behavioral and cognitive changes in Alzheimer's model](#)
- [Chronic marijuana use negatively impacts male reproductive health, may decrease testicular function](#)
- [Study shows hemp compounds prevent coronavirus from entering human cells](#)
- [Nanotechnology may better identify, treat ectopic pregnancy](#)

National/international organizations that support biomedical research in animal models

- [National Association for Biomedical Research](#) – a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating sound public policy for ethical and essential animal research.
- [Speaking of Research](#) -- an international advocacy group that provides accurate information about the importance of animal research in the biomedical, behavioral and life sciences.
- [National Animal Interest Alliance](#) -- an association of business, agricultural, scientific and recreational interests dedicated to promoting animal welfare, supporting responsible animal use

and strengthening the bond between humans and animals.

- [Foundation for Biomedical Research](#) -- a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving human and animal health by promoting public understanding and support for biomedical research.
- [Northwest Association for Biomedical Research](#) - an organization dedicated to promoting the public's trust in ethically conducted biomedical research through education and dialogue.
- [National Center for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research](#) - an organization that supports the commitment of the scientific community to the 3Rs by funding research and early career development, open innovation and the commercialization of 3Rs technologies, and stimulating changes in policy, regulations and practice.
- [American Association for Laboratory Animal Science \(AALAS\)](#) - provides training and continuing education opportunities for laboratory animal professionals.
- [Americans for Medical Progress](#) - an organization that focuses on public outreach that builds understanding and appreciation for necessary and humane animal research.

Mar 7, 2025, 886 views

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