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Subject: The Oregon National Primate Center at OHSU must remain open

Dear Oregon Healthcare Market Oversight Program members,

I am writing to express my **strong support for the Oregon National Primate Research Center (ONPRC)** and to urge you to reject misinformation that threatens this critical research institution.

Recently, **false claims by groups like the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) have distorted the reality of ONPRC's work** and its commitment to both scientific progress and animal welfare. These attacks not only misrepresent the facts but also endanger the future of medical innovation, public health, and compassionate animal care.

Setting the Record Straight: Why ONPRC must remain open

False Claim #1: ONPRC mistreats animals.

Fact: ONPRC upholds **the highest animal welfare standards**, exceeding the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act and USDA oversight. Animal research is often misunderstood, but the reality is simple: this work is a mission of love—for people and animals alike. Researchers, veterinarians, and animal care teams dedicate their lives to advancing medicine, ensuring the highest ethical standards, and protecting both human and animal health.

Veterinary technicians and animal care teams form deep bonds with the animals they work with, providing them with enrichment, comfort, and the best possible care. Veterinarians and animal care professionals at ONPRC provide **around-the-clock care, enrichment, and medical attention**, ensuring that all animals receive humane and ethical treatment.

False Claim #2: Primate research is outdated and unnecessary.

Fact: While scientific advancements have introduced alternative models, **no technology fully replicates the complexity of a living system**. Primate research remains **critical** for studying conditions such as **Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, infectious diseases, and reproductive health**—areas where animal-free methods cannot yet provide complete answers.

The public demands new medicines, vaccines, and therapies—but those advancements do not happen without ethical research, including necessary animal studies.

We live in a world of scientific reality, where new treatments and cures require rigorous study before they are safe for people or animals.

False Claim #3: ONPRC research is wasteful and doesn't benefit human health.

Fact: ONPRC has contributed to **breakthrough medical discoveries** that have improved and saved millions of lives. For example:

- **Vaccines & Infectious Disease Research** – ONPRC studies were key to the development of **COVID-19, Zika, and HIV treatments**.
- **Neurological Disorders** – ONPRC research has advanced treatments for **multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's disease**.
- **Cancer Therapies** – Studies at ONPRC have led to **new cancer drugs and improved radiation therapies**.

Why This Matters—For Oregon and Beyond

ONPRC is not just an Oregon institution—it is a **national leader** in biomedical research, driving medical innovation across the country. Restricting or closing ONPRC would mean:

- **A loss of life-saving research** that directly impacts millions of patients.
- **A blow to Oregon's economy**—ONPRC supports **thousands of jobs** and generates millions in federal research funding.
- **A shift of research to countries with weaker animal welfare regulations**, rather than maintaining strong ethical oversight in the U.S.

Why I'm Writing, Even from Outside Oregon

While I may not be an Oregon resident, I recognize that **the work done at ONPRC affects public health, medical innovation, and patient care nationwide**. If ONPRC's work is restricted, **Americans everywhere will feel the impact**—fewer medical breakthroughs, slower development of life-saving therapies, and weakened U.S. leadership in biomedical research.

Biological processes are complex. Understanding them requires asking a series of questions that build upon each other. At each step, researchers must decide how a particular question can best be answered.

Some questions can be answered using computer models or new technologies such as organs-on-a-chip—approaches based upon what is already known about a biological process.

Other kinds of questions can be answered by sequencing genes or looking at what happens when isolated cells or tissues are exposed to certain conditions. These approaches provide a great deal of information, but they can't answer every question.

Without the research being done every day at ONPRC, many of the scientific breakthroughs that save lives and improve human health would not be possible.

HCMO, I urge you to stand with science, ethics, and progress. **Please publicly support ONPRC and reject the misleading attacks that threaten both Oregon's research leadership and the future of medical innovation.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. **I appreciate your commitment to facts, animal welfare and compassion, and Oregon's place as a leader in medical innovation.**

Sincerely,

Sara Kelly, Research Manager
University of Washington