



CALIFORNIA NATIONAL PRIMATE RESEARCH CENTER  
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8542

April 14, 2025

To: [Oregon Health Care Market Oversight \(HCMO\) program](#)

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

Dear respected Sir, Madam,

As Research Professor and leader of the Unit of Infectious Diseases at the **California National Primate Research Center** (University of California, Davis), and having 35 years of research experience, 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.

I have yet to meet a vet, vet tech, or animal care team who doesn't love animals. Vets have told me personally that they prefer working in animal research to private practice because animals in research are so much better taken care of than many, many pets. Animals at National Primate Research Centers are healthier than the majority of nonhuman primates in the wild.

**False Claim #2:** Primate research is outdated and unnecessary.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. This situation has become even more urgent now under the current federal government which is promoting vaccine hesitancy and attacking research-proven effective interventions. The current measles outbreak is a prime example. Other infectious diseases that have been increasing rapidly the past year include Dengue virus, for which there is currently no approved antiviral drug on the market. The discovery of anti-Dengue drugs is most likely going to depend on research in nonhuman primates, including at the ONPRC.

### **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.

### **My Personal Experience with Animal Research and Exceptional Animal Care**

I have been engaged since 1990 in research on the use of nonhuman primate models of infectious diseases at the California National Primate Research Center. A large focus has been interventions on HIV. Thirty years ago, I was among the first researchers to test a novel anti-HIV drug tenofovir, that has since then become the most widely used HIV drug in the world, and is used – as part of combination regimens – to treat or prevent HIV infection. This demonstrates the power and importance of research in nonhuman primates.

Accordingly, 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.**

I will be more than happy to answer any questions and provide further information in support of ONPRC. I am willing to travel to Oregon at my own expenses for an in-person meeting to discuss with you and your staff.

Sincerely,



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