



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

March 27, 2020

Joan T.A. Gabel, J.D.  
Office of the President  
University of Minnesota  
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100 Church Street S.E.  
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Via e-mail: [upres@umn.edu](mailto:upres@umn.edu)

Dear President Gabel,

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide regarding an urgent matter. Based on the repeated and documented failure of University of Minnesota (UMN) to meet the provisions of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, and given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,<sup>1</sup> we urge UMN to immediately: 1) prohibit approval of new animal protocols and experiments; 2) prohibit breeding and acquisition of new animals for laboratories; 3) finalize and end ongoing animal experiments; and, 4) prove that all of these animals and experiments are concretely advancing human health, and if they're not then switch to superior human-relevant, animal-free research methods.<sup>2</sup>

### **UMN's Culture of Noncompliance: Violations to the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals**

According to public records obtained by PETA from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) via the Freedom of Information Act, UMN has reported many violations to the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. The following are a few of them: three monkeys were forced to endure unapproved CT scans; mice and rats did not received pain medication after undergoing surgery as described in the approved protocol; in two separate incidents, 89 mice were administered expired anesthetic; animals were affected by unapproved water restriction; a female guinea pig and her four pups died in their cage after their health declined and an indication for euthanasia was

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US\\_FINAL\\_2020\\_300.pdf](https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf)

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- PETA Netherlands
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ignored by the staff; and one mice died after getting stuck between the lid of the cage and the wire bar.

### **COVID-19: Ending Animal Experiments Protects Animals, Staff, and Patients**

As part of its COVID-19 contingency plan, UMN is urging its experimenters to “euthanize [animals] as soon as [their] data is collected” and to mark “the 20% of ‘priority save’ cages,”<sup>3</sup> which will likely lead to the killing of many animals. This begs the question why taxpayer dollars are being used on experiments that can easily be ended or delayed or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered by many universities to be extraneous to the testing in the first place. Equally troubling is that the experiments themselves are not critical to advancing human health, since more than 90 percent of highly promising basic science discoveries (most of which involve animal experiments) do not enter routine clinical use in humans.<sup>4</sup>

We call on UMN to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of UMN’s COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as critical, essential, necessary, and/or other similar terminology);
- 2) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will not continue as part of UMN’s COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as extraneous, non-critical, non-essential, ramped down, disposable, unnecessary and/or other similar terminology);
- 3) The number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 1 above (e.g., in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category); and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and notice of if, when, and how many of these animals have been and/or will be euthanized, culled, killed, destroyed, disposed or reduced in cage census.

You can contact me by e-mail at [ShalinG@peta.org](mailto:ShalinG@peta.org) or by telephone at 757-962-8325. We look forward to your swift reply to this quickly developing and urgent matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Shalin G. Gala

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<sup>3</sup><http://view.ecommunications2.umn.edu/?qs=894dcc0c2da765cfa8a94a720473eec87c37c3b37dd134616c8fdf634a3b3eb0bc896b59444b42346c837da327964e7787c3a9e83d43ea78176401590827a7da5c18649a0999394c2a3ae3c3b0706e81>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>

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