



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

March 24, 2020

Seth Bodnar
Office of the President
University of Montana
University Hall 109
Missoula, Montana 59812

Via e-mail: thepresident@umontana.edu

Dear President Bodnar,

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. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Montana (UM) is apparently urging researchers to reduce "population numbers"¹ in their protocols, which likely will lead to the destruction of many animals.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,² we urge UM 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.³

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

UM is implementing a COVID-19 contingency plan in which "researchers with active animal studies" are urged to "consider finalizing experimental endpoints and reducing population numbers in accordance with approved animal use protocols" and to "delay starting longitudinal studies until further notice."⁴ This begs the question why taxpayer dollars are being used on experiments that can easily be ended

¹ https://missoulain.com/news/local/um-researchers-prepare-for-potential-coronavirus-interruption/article_fe1cc6ca-19c9-5cc6-8661-602f67c58e4b.html

² <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

³ https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf

⁴ https://missoulain.com/news/local/um-researchers-prepare-for-potential-coronavirus-interruption/article_fe1cc6ca-19c9-5cc6-8661-602f67c58e4b.html

Washington, D.C.
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Berkeley
2855 Telegraph Ave.
Ste. 301
Berkeley, CA 94705
510-763-PETA

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

Affiliates:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered 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.⁵

We further call on UM to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of UM'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 UM'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, and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above; and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above, 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 directly by e-mail at 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
Vice President, International Laboratory Methods
Laboratory Investigations Department

⁵ <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>