AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF ALL ANIMALS

PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

Washington
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

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

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

September 19, 2025

Board of Regents
University of Washington
139 Gerberding Hall
Box 351264
Seattle, WA 98195-1264
Delivered via e-mail: regents@uw.edu

Dear Regents,

I am writing in follow-up to the letter we delivered last week detailing ongoing concerns at the Washington National Primate Research Center (WaNPRC). This correspondence is not simply a continuation—it documents yet another leadership-level failure that strikes at the core of UW's obligations to scientific integrity, animal welfare, and the responsible stewardship of federal funds. I do so in my capacity as a scientist with decades of experience in primate research and oversight.

Leadership failure—not an isolated lapse
Recent disclosures show that Dr. Kristina Adams Waldorf, WaNPRC's Associate Director of Research, admitted to injecting monkeys with the wrong virus for nearly two years in a federally funded H1N1 influenza study. This is not a one-off mistake; it is part of a pattern of leadership failure at WaNPRC. When those charged with setting the standard instead ignore the most basic protocols, the result is predictable: wasted federal dollars, animal suffering, unreliable data, and serious risk to UW's reputation. Former Director Michele Basso's surgical violations exposed this breakdown years ago. The Adams Waldorf case proves it continues today—and it falls to you, the Regents, to decide whether this institution will keep rewarding failure or take responsibility for ending it.

Fatal flaws in the H1N1 pregnancy study
In an NIH-funded H1N1 influenza study in pregnant macaques, Adams Waldorf squandered nearly $4 million in federal funding under NIH grant R01 AI164588 (NIAID, $833,919/year). Because the wrong virus was used, the study could not meet its scientific aims. Nearly two years of federally funded research, the deaths of ten monkeys, and the data produced are now of questionable value. This was the most fundamental breakdown: no one confirmed what was in the bottle, what was in the syringe, or what was in the monkey. It was not just a scientific collapse but a biosecurity concern—the mishandling of H1N1 raises urgent questions about where in the research pipeline the error occurred, how it went undetected for so long, and whether similar lapses are occurring in her other federally funded projects.

Inadequate oversight response
UW's IACUC acknowledged in November 2024 that researchers had been injecting the wrong material for nearly two years in a federally funded infectious-disease experiment.[1] Yet there was no immediate suspension of the study, no independent audit of viral materials, no requirement for external review, and no comprehensive corrective-action plan commensurate with the gravity of such a blunder.

[1] November 14, 2024 UW IACUC meeting minutes https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.uw.edu/dist/d/18358/files/2025/02/IACUC-Meeting-Minutes-Approved-November-2024.pdf

An oversight body that treats such an admission as a discussion item rather than a sentinel event invites recurrence.

The pathogen problem

Oversight failures at WaNPRC are not confined to experimental protocols. They extend to the most basic responsibility of a biomedical facility: containing and reporting dangerous pathogens. Leadership failures have not only compromised federally funded science, they have also exposed UW to repeated biosecurity lapses involving infectious disease. Records obtained[2] under a Public Records Request confirm that during Basso's tenure as director, monkeys at the Seattle facility were repeatedly documented with unintended pathogens—including Campylobacter, Shigella, Cryptosporidium, Giardia, and Coccidioidomycosis (Valley Fever)—all of which are notifiable diseases in Washington.[3] Many of the infected monkeys were housed in the same complex as the UW Hospital. A hallway, some stairs and a set of doors may separate animals from patients, students, and staff, but pathogens do not respect architectural boundaries.

To date, there is no indication WaNPRC has notified the state Department of Health. The likely defense—that reporting is unnecessary because monkeys are not humans—may be technically accurate, but it undermines the spirit of Washington's notifiable disease framework and basic biosafety principles. In a facility physically linked to a major hospital, repeated detections of notifiable pathogens in monkeys are not a technicality—they are a direct failure of UW's responsibility to protect patients, students, staff, and the wider community.

The record trail makes clear these pathogens did not appear spontaneously within WaNPRC—they arrived with monkeys shipped in from the Arizona Breeding Facility.[4] Rather than treating these detections as a red flag, WaNPRC compounded the risk: within a year, UW transferred NIH-funded monkeys from this infected cohort across the country to the CDC.[5] Because the available records do not include the health status of the animals subsequently transferred to the CDC, their precise disease status cannot be verified. Still, given the repeated detection of notifiable pathogens in the colony, it strains credulity to think that the monkeys sent to the CDC were free of infection. By transferring federally funded animals from a colony with repeated detections of notifiable pathogens into another federal facility, UW magnified the risk of cross-contamination, contradicted NIH's commitment to biosafety, and further eroded both scientific credibility and public trust.

Responsible use of public funds and ongoing NIH awards

UW should be required to return the NIH funds associated with Adams-Waldorf's compromised H1N1 study. Beyond that, the university must conduct a rigorous, independent review of her active NIH portfolio[6]—nearly $4 million a year—to determine whether basic safeguards are in place to confirm what materials are being used, how they are handled, and whether the resulting data can be trusted. UW should

---

[2] Open Veterinary Cases at WaNPRC's Seattle facility on October 6, 2023 https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2024-02-08-PR_2024_000149.pdf

[3] Washington State Department of Health List of Notifiable Conditions. https://doh.wa.gov/public-health-provider-resources/notifiable-conditions/list-notifiable-conditions Accessed Sept 19, 2025.

[4] September 27, 2023 shipment of monkeys from WaNPRC AZ breeding facility to Seattle. Highlighted monkey IDs are those who tested positive for notifiable conditions on October 2, 2023 during their new arrival healthcare exams in Seattle. https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2023-09-28-WaNPRC-AZ-to-WaNPRC-Seattle.pdf

[5] November 4, 2024 Certificate of Veterinary Inspection for the movement of monkeys from the WaNPRC's Seattle facility to the CDC. Highlighted animals had tested positive for multiple notifiable conditions while at WaNPRC. https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2024-11-05-WaNPRC-Seattle-to-CDC.pdf

[6] Active NIH Grants – Kristina Adams Waldorf (UW):
– R01 AI164588 (NIAID) – Influenza Pathogenesis in Pregnancy — $833,919 (2025)
– R01 HD098713 (NICHD) – Targeted Inhibition of Interleukin-1β to Prevent Preterm Birth — $755,520 (2024)
– R38 AI181011 (NIAID) – Reproductive and Child Health StaRR Program — $402,731 (2025)
– R01 AI176777 (NIAID) – Impact of Zika Virus Infection on Fetal Innate and Adaptive Immunity — $844,016 (2025)
– R01 HD114744 (NICHD) – IL-10 Delivery Using Extracellular Vesicles to Delay Preterm Birth (co-investigator, UTMB; active 2025)

also come forward and return the funds awarded through the U42 Arizona breeding grant[7], which used taxpayer dollars to bankroll the pipeline that introduced diseased monkeys into WaNPRC and ultimately into federal facilities—compounding scientific failures, biosecurity risks, and the waste of public trust and money.

Essential next steps
To protect UW's scientific standing and the public interest, PETA respectfully requests that the Regents direct the following:

1. **Close the reporting gap.** WaNPRC repeatedly detected notifiable pathogens in monkeys housed with the UW Health Sciences Complex yet does not appear to have alerted state officials. Regents must require formal reporting to the Washington State Department of Health and adopt a standing policy for future cases.

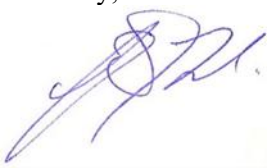
2. **Address failed oversight of federally funded research.** The H1N1 pregnancy study squandered nearly $4 million and ten monkeys' lives. Regents should notify NIH of noncompliance and call on UW to return those taxpayer funds. The U42 Arizona breeding grant bankrolled the pipeline that introduced diseased monkeys into WaNPRC and federal labs. Regents should call on UW to return those taxpayer funds.

3. **Rein in leadership negligence.** Place Dr. Adams Waldorf on administrative hold for primate procedures until an independent audit demonstrates that basic safeguards—verification, record-keeping, and oversight—are actually being followed.

4. **Rebuild procedural safeguards.** Direct the IACUC to institute baseline protections: barcode tracking of materials, dual sign-offs for high-risk procedures, lot numbers logged in records, and random outside spot checks.

If researchers at the leadership level in the primate center cannot verify what's in the bottle, what's in the syringe, what's in the monkey—and cannot even keep their colonies free of pathogens notifiable to the state health department—the public cannot have confidence in the resulting data or the decisions built upon them. UW's reputation, and the integrity of its research enterprise, depend on decisive action. I would be happy to meet with you and discuss these issues.

Sincerely,



Lisa Jones-Engel, Ph.D.
Senior Science Advisor Primate Experimentation
Department of Laboratory Investigations
PETA

cc: President Robert Jones president@uw.edu

[7] 5U42OD011123 (OD) ---WaNPRC Macaca nemestrina SPF Breeding Colony---$2,122,974 (2025)