



February 17, 2026

Michael F. Collins, M.D.  
Chancellor  
University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School

Via e-mail: [Michael.Collins@umassmed.edu](mailto:Michael.Collins@umassmed.edu)

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

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Dear Chancellor Collins,

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to express serious concerns regarding invasive and deadly experiments conducted on dogs, purchased as puppies, in Matthew Gounis's laboratory at UMass Chan Medical School (UMass Chan), as well as the profound conflict of interest created by Gounis's simultaneous role as Chair of the school's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) since at least May 2022.

As you likely know, insiders at Chan approached PETA with allegations of serious and credible animal welfare violations. These allegations are detailed in our complaints to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and can be found [here](#) and [here](#), and were covered by the [Boston Globe](#) and other media outlets.

The dogs used in Gounis's experiments are the very animals who, as PETA exposed, were allegedly deliberately underfed in order to keep their body weight at or below 19 kilograms—the threshold above which state and federal law would have required that they be housed in larger cages. Laboratory records and photographs show that the dogs' ribs were visible, and their hipbones protruded. For dogs in laboratories—whose lives are reduced to cement kennels, extreme deprivation, and the absence of any family to love them or meet their needs—food is one small measure of comfort, something they anticipate and rely upon. Yet even this was denied to the dogs in Gounis's laboratory.

The chronic hunger induced by this restriction led to food aggression, which in turn was used to justify housing the dogs alone, further depriving them of the companionship of other dogs and compounding their isolation and distress.

Gounis's laboratory purchases puppies when they are just four months old. Experimenters slice deep into dogs' necks, expose and cut their blood vessels, and sew in veins removed from elsewhere in their bodies to cause abnormal bulges known as aneurysms.

The dogs then endure another round of invasive surgeries as experimenters implant devices into their bodies by cutting into their thighs, pushing apart layers of their muscle tissues, exposing and slicing into arteries, and threading catheters through the blood vessels.

Entities:

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

The torment doesn't stop there. The dogs are then subjected to up to five follow-up procedures in which experimenters surgically reopen the animals' femoral artery and thread imaging equipment to the artificial aneurysm in the neck to force them through extended invasive imaging, causing a cycle of agonizing pain and distress. Despite federal law that prohibits animals from being used in more than one major surgery from which the animal is allowed to recover, Gounis, with the IACUC's rubber-stamp approval, classified multiple highly invasive survival surgeries as minor, thereby circumventing the safeguard.

Throughout the course of the study, dogs are also restrained for MRI scans, repeatedly bled from major veins, fasted prior to surgeries, and frequently confined alone in kennels. Every dog used in these experiments is ultimately killed. In the terminal procedure, the dog is immobilized while a large spinal needle is inserted into the lower back and guided into the space surrounding the spinal cord. Imaging equipment is advanced along the spinal canal, after which the dog is killed.

These experiments are undeniably cruel, invasive, and lethal. That they were approved during the same period in which Gounis has served as Chair of the IACUC raises deeply troubling questions. The IACUC is charged with providing independent, objective oversight to protect animals from unnecessary pain and distress. When the chair of that committee is himself conducting experiments of this severity on dogs, the appearance of impropriety is unavoidable. At minimum, this dual role suggests bias in the approvals process and undermines confidence in the integrity of the university's animal-care oversight.

Given these concerns, I respectfully request that you remove Gounis from his position as Chair of the IACUC. I also ask that you instruct the committee to revoke its approval of Gounis's dog protocol. These steps are necessary to restore credibility to the oversight process and to demonstrate that UMass Chan takes its ethical and regulatory obligations seriously.

We are aware that you will be stepping down as Chancellor at the end of June. By taking decisive action to halt these experiments and address the failures that enabled them, you can ensure your legacy includes a clear commitment to compassion, accountability, and the ethical treatment of animals.

Thank you for your attention to this grave matter. I would welcome the opportunity to provide additional documentation or discuss these concerns further at your convenience. May I hear from you?

Sincerely,



Alka Chandna, Ph.D.  
Vice President  
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