



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Telephone: (301) 496-7163
Home Page: <https://olaw.nih.gov>

July 29, 2026

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
A3281-01 (OLAW Case 3G)

P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research and Innovation
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street
Biotech One, (b) (4)
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Rao,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your July 15, 2026, letter reporting an instance of noncompliance with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) following up on an initial June 24, 2026, notification by email. It is noted that the research project is supported by NIH funding.

According to the information provided, this Office understands that the VCU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) determined that instances of noncompliance occurred with respect to protocol suspension. The final report states that the IACUC determined that a laboratory repeatedly failed to comply with their approved protocols. It is noted that the lab specifically failed to implement humane endpoints approved in the protocol. In response to the findings, the IACUC suspended the studies until the Principal Investigator (PI) met with leadership to address the issues and create an appropriate corrective action plan.

The following corrective action plan was developed in response to the incidents:

- The PI was notified of the IACUC's decision to suspend the protocol. Following the notification, the PI elected to discontinue the studies and voluntarily close all active IACUC protocols.
- The Department Chair and the Senior Associate Dean for Research were notified of the suspension and the subsequent closure of the protocols.

Your prompt and thorough resolution of this matter is commendable and consistent with the PHS Policy philosophy of monitored self-regulation. We appreciate having been informed of these matters and find no cause for further action by this Office.

Sincerely,

JACQUELYN T. TUBBS -S
T. TUBBS -S

Digitally signed by
JACQUELYN T. TUBBS -S
Date: 2026.07.29
10:50:35 -04'00'

Jacquelyn Tubbs, DVM, DACLAM
Acting Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

cc: IACUC contact

A3281-3G



July 15, 2026

Virginia Commonwealth University

Jacquelyn Tubbs, D.V.M.
Acting Director
Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health
(301) 402-2081

Office of the Vice President for
Research and Innovation

BioTech One, (b) (4)
800 East Leigh Street
Box 980568
Richmond, Virginia 23298

(b) (6)

research.vcu.edu

P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D.
Vice president for research and
innovation

Re: VCU Animal Welfare Assurance number D16-00180 (A3281-01)
[OLAW Case A3281-3G]

Dear Dr. Tubbs,

Virginia Commonwealth University, in accordance with Assurance D16-00180 (A3281-01) and PHS Policy IV.F.3, reports that the IACUC suspended a research protocol on June 17, 2026 due to protocol non-compliance. This matter was initially reported to OLAW on June 24, 2026, via a telephone call by (b) (6). (b) (6) NIH was identified as the sponsor through an award that ended on June 30, 2026.

Description of the concern:

The IACUC determined that the laboratory had repeatedly failed to adhere to IACUC-approved protocols, particularly by failing to implement approved humane endpoints. As a result of these repeated instances of noncompliance, the IACUC voted to suspend the studies until the Principal Investigator (PI) met with Animal Care and Use Program leadership to address these concerns and develop an appropriate corrective action plan.

Corrective Actions:

1. On June 19, 2026, the PI was notified of the IACUC's decision to suspend the protocol. Following this notification, the PI elected to discontinue the studies and voluntarily close all active IACUC protocols.
2. The Department Chair and the Senior Associate Dean for Research were notified of the suspension and the subsequent closure of the protocols.

We appreciate your consideration of VCU's prompt efforts to address this suspension and prevent future occurrences. VCU assures OLAW of its commitment to animal welfare and acknowledges its ethical responsibilities to ensure the well-being of research animals and to comply with the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
(b) (6)

EA920342DBAE43B
P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D.

Vice President for Research and Innovation

an equal opportunity/affirmative action university

Williams, Angelina (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 2:06 PM
To: (b) (6)
Cc: Srirama Rao; (b) (6) OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Follow-up final letter for Case A3281-3G (VCU Assurance# D16-00180/A3281-01)

Hello,

Thank you for providing this final report for OLAW case **A3281-3G**. We will send an official response soon.

Disclaimer: Please note that this message and any of its attachments are intended for the named recipient(s) only and may contain confidential, protected or privileged information that should not be distributed to unauthorized individuals. If you have received this message in error, please contact the sender.

Very respectfully,

Angelina Williams, DVM, MPH, DACLAM, DACVPM, FAC-COR, CPH
Lieutenant Commander (LCDR), US Public Health Service
Animal Welfare Program Specialist
National Institutes of Health
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
Office: (301) 451-1952

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 9:18 AM
To: Tubbs, Jacquelyn (NIH/OD) [E] <jacquelyn.tubbs@nih.gov>; OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Cc: Srirama Rao <psrao@vcu.edu>; (b) (6)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Follow-up final letter for Case A3281-3G (VCU Assurance# D16-00180/A3281-01)

Dear Dr. Tubbs,

Attached is the final follow-up letter for Case A3281-3G, signed by VCU's Institutional Official, Dr. Rao (copied on this email). I discussed and reported this to you today via telephone on June 24.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. VCU remains fully committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Public Health Service Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, while continuing to uphold the highest standards of animal welfare.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at (b) (6) or via email (b) (6)

Best regards,

(b) (6)



From: (b) (6)
To: [Tubbs, Jacquelyn \(NIH/OD\) \[E\]](#)
Cc: [OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight \(NIH/OD\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: OLAW case numbers for preliminary reports
Date: Friday, June 26, 2026 12:46:08 PM

Dear Dr. Tubbs,

Thank you for providing the case numbers for these preliminary reports. I will reference them in the final incident reports.

Have a nice weekend!

(b) (6)

On Fri, Jun 26, 2026 at 10:43 AM Tubbs, Jacquelyn (NIH/OD) [E]
<jacquelyn.tubbs@nih.gov> wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for providing the preliminary phone reports, which has been assigned as OLAW case **A3281-3F** (husbandry deviation) and **A3281-3G** (protocol suspension). Please reference this case ID when providing any updates or submitting the final report for this incident.

Disclaimer: Please note that this message and any of its attachments are intended for the named recipient(s) only and may contain confidential, protected or privileged information that should not be distributed to unauthorized individuals. If you have received this message in error, please contact the sender.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Tubbs, DVM, DACLAM

Acting Director, Division of Compliance Oversight

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare

National Institutes of Health

jacquelyn.tubbs@nih.gov

(b) (6)





Initial Report of Noncompliance

By: J. Tubbs

Date: **06-24-2026**

Time: 1047A

Name of Person reporting: (b) (6)
Telephone #: (b) (6)
Fax #:
Email:

Name of Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University
Assurance number: A3281-01

Did incident involve PHS funded activity?

Funding component:

Was funding component contacted (if necessary): _____

What happened?

Protocol suspension occurred June 17, 2026, mice involved, due to failure to adhere to the protocol.

Species involved: mice

Personnel involved: research

Dates and times: June 2026

Animal deaths:

Projected plan and schedule for correction/prevention (if known): _____

Projected submission to OLAW of final report from Institutional Official:
60-90d

OFFICE USE ONLY

Case # _____

From: Tubbs, Jacquelyn (NIH/OD) [E]
To: (b) (6)
Cc: [OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight \(NIH/OD\)](#)
Subject: OLAW case numbers for preliminary reports
Date: Friday, June 26, 2026 10:42:46 AM

Hello,

Thank you for providing the preliminary phone reports, which has been assigned as OLAW case **A3281-3F** (husbandry deviation) and **A3281-3G** (protocol suspension).

Please reference this case ID when providing any updates or submitting the final report for this incident.

***Disclaimer:** Please note that this message and any of its attachments are intended for the named recipient(s) only and may contain confidential, protected or privileged information that should not be distributed to unauthorized individuals. If you have received this message in error, please contact the sender.*

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Tubbs, DVM, DACLAM
Acting Director, Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health
Jacquelyn.tubbs@nih.gov