

William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital
VA IACUC Policy #19-13

Procedures for reporting potential deficiencies in the animal care & use program without reprisal to the reporter (Whistle Blower Policy)

Policy: Anyone who believes he/she has identified a problem regarding the ethical treatment and use of animals at the VA should inform one of the following people who are in the local chain of command for animal care and use issues. This sequence of contacts is intended to provide the opportunity to resolve the problem at the lowest administrative level, unless the whistle blower has reason to believe that his/her own employment status may be jeopardized by doing so:

- Animal Research Facility Supervisor (Robin.Faust@va.gov; Ext. 1-7875)
- Veterinary Medical Officer (Dr. Taylor; rlt51743@gmail.com)
- Administrative Officer, Research Service (Marvin.Rupp@va.gov; Ext. 1-7801)
- Chairman, IACUC (Dr. Pugh; tdpugh@wisc.edu)

If none of these parties responds by either resolving the problem or by formally referring it to the IACUC for action, or if the IACUC does not act upon the problem and notify the person of the actions taken by the IACUC, then the person may inform the Hospital Director, who is the Institutional Official and highest local authority responsible for animal welfare issues.

If the Hospital Director does not act upon the problem and notify the person of the actions he has taken, then the person may contact the VA's Chief Veterinary Medical Officer in the Office of Research and Development (ORD) directly to discuss the concerns, solicit guidance or seek information without requesting local permission to do so. Consistent with USDA regulations and Federal law, actions may not be taken against an employee for the act of contacting the CVMO.

Anyone may express in writing to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee concerns about care and use of animals. The IACUC will review evidence, determine if a minor or significant deviation from PHS Policy or the provisions of the Guide has occurred, and order corrective action if appropriate. In the case of serious noncompliance, the IACUC may order suspension of the activity involved. Issues of serious or continuing noncompliance, and any suspension of activity, will be reported to the ACOS for Research, the Director, the Veterinary Medical Officer in the Office of Research and Development (ORD), and OLAW. Findings and action will also be reported to the person(s) who originated the expression of concern.

The name, mailing address, and phone number of the Chair of the IACUC will be posted prominently in the Animal Research Facility to facilitate the reporting of concerns about animal use and care.

Questions: Any questions on this policy should be directed to the A.O. (280-7222 or VA Ext. 1-7801).

Reference: VHA Handbook 1200.07 *Contact with CVMO*
VA Employee Handbook, *Whistleblower protection*
Local PHS Assurance (A3682-01)

Effective date: This policy was approved at the IACUC meeting on 1/24/2005.
Subsequent reviews and edits approved on: 9/08/2008, 9/14/2009, 11/22/2010,
5/02/2011, 9/12/12, 11/06/13.

NOTICE

Questions, concerns or complaints about the care and/or welfare of research animals?

A – You can directly contact your supervisor or the research investigator directly to express your concerns or questions

OR

B – You can contact the Chair of the VA Animal Care Committee

Thomas Pugh by phone – 345-1032

Or by email: tdpugh@wisc.edu

C. You may also contact the Animal Research Facility Supervisor

Robin Faust by phone 256-1901 x 17872

Or by email robin.faust@va.gov

Any individual who has concerns related to the use of animals in biomedical research affiliated with the William S. Middleton VA Hospital is encouraged to voice those concerns at whatever level of the VA authority that is appropriate. The VA will not tolerate any reprisal against an individual who has come forward with concerns or allegations or wrong-doing involving the care and use of animals. Such reprisal is prohibited by law and the perpetrators are subject to sanctions. Individuals who feel that a personnel action has been taken against them because they reported an apparent violation of animal care and use requirements should present their case to their supervisor or any of the individuals listed above.

