

Adequate Veterinary Care

General Policy

The Attending Veterinarian (AV) is appointed by the Chief Research Officer of the University and is responsible for assuring that adequate veterinary care is provided to all animals maintained within research facilities. The AV should be board-certified in Laboratory Animal Medicine, have training or experience in laboratory animal medicine, or otherwise be qualified in the care of the species being used. The AV has full authority for all aspects of the research animal program at the institution. The veterinary care program assures that all animals are procured from lawful sources and that their procurement, transportation, and receipt are in compliance with federal, state, and local animal welfare regulations. It also assures that animals meet specific health requirements before they can be used for research and that they have been provided an opportunity to acclimate to the facility environment, unless specifically exempted by the Attending Veterinarian, so that they are physiologically stable prior to study initiation. Lastly, the veterinary care program assures that all animals are evaluated daily for abnormal findings and that proper treatments or actions are taken based on the expected research outcomes. Based on the specific research procedures, further consultation regarding anesthesia, analgesia, surgery, assessment for pain/distress, and euthanasia may be provided by the AV. Specific requirements or guidelines for these program components are provided below or in other IACUC policies.

Daily Health Checks

The AV will provide veterinary oversight to animals housed at the institution. Animals must be observed daily by staff trained to identify abnormal health. Central animal facilities managed by the institution will involve observations by animal care staff. Monitoring of animals in satellite housing or research facilities is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI). More frequent observations than once daily are required for specific research manipulations such as post-operative recovery, induced physical deficits, or associated with humane endpoints. Specific personnel responsible for these observations are documented and approved in the applicable IACUC-approved protocol. All sick animals and unexpected conditions must be communicated to the AV or their designee. The treatment plan will be communicated to the PI by the AV to ensure that there are no conflicts with an ongoing study. All communications must be responded to within the requested time. If this does not occur, the veterinarian will determine if the treatment plan should be implemented in the absence of consent from the PI.

The AV conducts regularly scheduled rounds of all animal rooms to evaluate on-going cases, answer health questions from animal care and technical staff, and evaluate the quality of the program.

Record keeping

Daily health checks will always be documented. Each facility or laboratory must have a standard operating procedures describing how this will be done. Records should include documentation that animals were checked and include any health problems or deaths. Additionally, any environmental

parameters that are monitored should be recorded. These records should be available for the attending veterinarian and IACUC to review upon request and during triennial facility inspections. Refer to the Policy on Animal Observation and Recordkeeping for further info.