

Funds Suspended After Animal Rights Groups Claim Abuse of Animals

Two research institutions have had their federal funds suspended after animal rights organizations claimed the facilities abused their laboratory animals.

Both institutions—the University of Pennsylvania and the City of Hope National Medical Center—were raided and vandalized last year by the underground Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and have been the targets of complaints to the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Fund For Animals.

University of Pennsylvania . . .

The animal rights activist who led a four-day sit-in at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has vowed to resume the sit-in should federal funding be restored to the Head Injury Clinical Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Alex Pacheco, in a statement in front of the NIH headquarters after DHHS announced the suspension of funds to the University for its head injury studies, told his supporters: “I have received assurances from (both) Health and Human Services and NIH” that the research would not be resumed “and I promised to (James) Wyngaarden that if the experiments continue, he’ll not only see 100 of us, he’ll see hundreds of us.”

Wyngaarden is the director of NIH, and Pacheco is the founder and chairman of PETA.

The sit-in by an estimated 100 animal rights activists climaxed a 13-month effort by PETA to end the federal support for the research at the University. The campaign was started after ALF broke into the University facility in May 1984, trashing the laboratory and stealing more than 60 hours of videotapes of the research conducted on baboons. The tapes were distilled into a 24-minute segment to show the primates struggling during a variety of experiments.

The decision to suspend the grant funds was made by DHHS Secretary Margaret Heckler. A final determination will be made after the University has had an opportunity to respond to questions about the head injury experiments.

The questions raised by NIH investigators indicate that the University failed, by and large, in its compliance with Public Health Service (PHS) policies for the care and use of laboratory animals.

Specific areas of concern cited in the NIH report involve supervision and training of laboratory personnel, management of anesthesia and analgesia research animals, adequacy of techniques used to achieve a sterile environment, the extent of veterinary participation in certain aspects of the experiments, and the occupational health program in the head injury laboratory. City of Hope . . .

All research funds were ordered suspended after NIH withdrew the City of Hope’s certificate of assurance that the facility is in compliance with the “PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.”

The Duarte, CA, institution was vandalized in December 1984 by ALF. The raid, which included the theft of 106 laboratory animals valued at \$450,000, interrupted \$500,000 worth of cancer, herpes, and emphysema research.

At the direction of NIH’s Office of Protection from Research Risks, the City of Hope established a six-member committee with three members not affiliated with the institution. The committee reviewed the claims of the animal rights groups and reported several areas of noncompliance including administrative oversight, veterinary care, and the animals’ physical environment.

NIH investigators have also visited the facility and are coordinating their efforts with the US Department of Agriculture, which also has been investigating the institution for possible violations of the Animal Welfare Act.

Like the University of Pennsylvania, the complaints found are largely in the management areas of research. Tom Galinski, administrator for the institution, said the problems indicated are correctable and will be corrected as soon as all of the findings of the investigations are complete.

Meanwhile, the one person who was arrested by police in northern California for possessing some of the cats stolen in the ALF raid at the City of Hope is still awaiting trial.

Revised NIH Guide Is Now Available

The newly revised edition of the “NIH Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals” is now available from two sources.

Single copies of the Guide may be obtained by writing the Office of Science and Health Reports, Division of Research Resources, Building 31, Room 5B-10, NIH, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20205. Bulk copies may be purchased by writing Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 or by calling (202) 783-3238. The publication number is 017-040-00498-2.

The Guide was revised by a special committee of the Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources of the National Academy of Sciences under contract from DHHS. The last previous revision of the Guide was in 1978.

The new Guide has an expanded bibliography and includes the addition of recommendations for new methods of cage ventilation and other housing requirements as well as some revisions in cage sizes.