

Title: Program for Veterinary Care
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Authorized by: Dr. David Ash, Vice President for Research and Dr. Robert Werner, Attending Veterinarian
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I. Purpose

This Policy outlines the Program for Veterinary Care for the Animal Care and Use (ACU) program at Central Michigan University and describes the responsibility and authority of the Attending Veterinarian (AV).

II. Scope

This Policy applies to all animals used in teaching, research or outreach activities conducted at Central Michigan University that are subject to oversight by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Vice President for Research (VPR) who serves as the Institutional Official (IO) as described in the CMU Assurance to the Public Health Service (PHS).

III. Policy

Program of Veterinary Care:

Authority of the Attending Veterinarian and back-up Attending Veterinarian:

Authority and responsibility for veterinary activities involving animals at CMU are delegated to the AV and back-up AV by the CMU Institutional Official (IO). As described in the CMU Assurance to the Public Health Service, and in compliance with the Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and PHS Policy, the Attending Veterinarian is responsible for the health and well-being of all animals at Central Michigan University.

The Attending Veterinarian (AV) at CMU is responsible for all the duties listed in the Animal Welfare Act Regulations §2.33¹, the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals 8th Edition² (the Guide) and listed in The IACUC Handbook Third Edition³.

The Guide (p.14) states "... the institution must provide the AV with sufficient authority, including access to all animals, and resources to manage the program of veterinary care." In accordance with the Guide and AWAR §2.33(2)⁴ the University fully authorizes the Attending Veterinarian to provide medical care and, if necessary, euthanasia to all animals used in teaching, research or outreach activities. The Attending Veterinarian is not required to obtain approval from the Principal Investigator or any other parties prior to providing treatment or euthanasia to research animals.

This policy pertains to the Attending Veterinarian (AV) or his/her designee(s) under the authority and/or direction of the AV. The AV has free access to all animals, but whenever reasonably possible, the AV or designee will solicit the input of the Principal Investigator (PI) or responsible research staff member(s) prior to implementing treatment or euthanasia of a research animal.

If the responsible research staff member and the AV or designee disagree regarding the need for animal treatment or euthanasia, the AV or designee is authorized to implement any and all actions deemed necessary based on her/his medical judgment.

In extreme and rare circumstances, it may be necessary for the AV or designee to implement animal treatment or euthanasia prior to contacting the PI or responsible research staff member. The AV or designee will promptly notify the Principal Investigator or responsible research staff of the animal treatment or euthanasia.

Veterinary Staff Qualifications:

Attending veterinary care and back up veterinary care are provided at Central Michigan University via contract. The AV must be experienced in laboratory animal medicine and should be board certified by the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine as endorsed by the Guide. Veterinary staff will be certified as Licensed Veterinary Technicians (LVT) or will have similar certifications appropriate to their delegated duties. Animal care staff will have certifications or training as deemed appropriate to their delegated animal care responsibilities by the AV.

Facilities and access to animals:

Animal housing and research areas will be used solely for teaching, research and outreach activities approved by the Central Michigan University (CMU) IACUC. CMU and individual Principal Investigators are responsible for providing the facilities and equipment needed to appropriately care for animals. The AV shall be available for consultation on the procurement and operation of equipment and facilities used for animal care and use.

The AV or back-up AV will have unfettered access to facilities. The AV and back-up AV will visit facilities periodically as needed, the approximate regularity of these visits is described in the addenda to this policy. During these visits the veterinarian participates in the IACUC meeting, tours the animal facilities, confers with facility managers, reviews issues related to animals on treatment or observation, meets with the compliance and post approval monitoring staff, and confers with researchers and others regarding issues of animal care and use. The attending and back up veterinarian provide preliminary review and advice to PI's regarding IACUC protocols via on site interviews, internet or phone. The attending and back up veterinarian confer as needed (7 days per week availability) with the facility managers, research staff and compliance staff via phone and internet to address clinical, facility, husbandry, and experimental use issues.

Animal Procurement, Transportation and Quarantine:

To prevent disease, the institutional goal is to procure selected pathogen free animals, when available. Every effort will be made to maintain separation of species and animals of defined health status from animals with unknown health status to limit the transmission of disease.

Potential vendors should be evaluated for the quality of animals supplied by them and the ability to provide information on genetics and pathogen status, when available. Similar information should be available on animals received from other institutions. Animals should be transported both on and off campus using methods to avoid the risk of zoonoses, provide protection against the environment, overcrowding, and physical trauma and allow for access to food and water, when indicated.

Newly arrived animals should be quarantined and stabilized for periods long enough to assess their health status, reduce shipping stress and adapt to the new environment. This will vary depending on the species, source of animals and planned use.

For farm animals, wild animals and random source animals, appropriate quarantine and isolation procedures must be employed.

Disease Control and Prevention and Clinical Treatment:

The AV and back-up AV have established, maintain, and supervise programs of disease control and prevention, as well as pest and parasite control, through vendor surveillance and quarantine of animals procured from non-approved sources; daily monitoring of animals for clinical problems by the animal facility staff; and conferring on observations by the animal facility staff with the attending and back up veterinarian when issues arise.

The AV is responsible for issuing and periodically updating standing treatment orders and assessment mechanisms for commonly occurring clinical issues and for authorizing specified personnel to carry out these standing treatment orders.

Disease surveillance is a major component of the veterinary program. Animal colonies should be routinely monitored for the presence of parasitic, bacterial and viral agents that may cause clinical or subclinical disease.

Diagnosis of animal disease will be the responsibility of the veterinarian. When illness or injury is discovered, the principal investigator, or his/her designated back-up(s) should discuss the situation with the veterinarian to determine a course of action consistent with the research goals and IACUC approved activity. Actions may include treatment, relief of pain and suffering and/or euthanasia. Animals with infectious diseases must be isolated from others in separate locations appropriate for disease containment. If the whole colony may be potentially infected, it may be left in location for monitoring and/or treatment. If the principal investigator or a member of the animal care staff is not available, then the veterinarian or animal facility coordinators authorized by the veterinarian have the authority to protect the health and well-being of the institution's animal colonies. This authority should be exercised with the concurrence of the IACUC and the Institutional Official whenever practicable.

Oversight/Other:

Pre-procedural and post-procedural care, nutrition, euthanasia, and animal enrichment are established through IACUC policies and veterinary consultations with research staff and are defined in IACUC approved protocols. Animal facility and post approval monitoring staff monitor for adherence to IACUC approved protocols and any unanticipated clinical problems. The attending and back up veterinarian confer on these issues via internet, phone, and on site visits.

Field Researcher Guidance:

If CMU field researchers observe animals exhibiting abnormal behavior, and the animals have not been handled as part of an IACUC approved study, researchers are not responsible for providing treatment/care. CMU researchers *are* encouraged to report their observations to local authorities, e.g., DNR, local law enforcement, when appropriate.

24 Hour Emergency Veterinary Care:

It is the policy of Central Michigan University to provide 24 emergency veterinary care to all animal utilized in research. To facilitate 24 hour emergency care, individuals observing animals that appear to be sick and/or appear to be in pain or distress are expected to contact the Principal Investigator, the contact people listed on the animal protocol form, the Vivarium manager, or attending veterinarian or designated back-up. These individual names and telephone numbers must be posted on the animal room door in the case of laboratory animals. If the animal is suffering pain or distress, prompt medical treatment must be provided or euthanasia must be performed. If the Principal Investigator or contact people listed cannot be located, or are unwilling to make the decision expeditiously, then the responsibility rests with the Vivarium manager or the attending veterinarian. Veterinary care consultation may be provided via conference call or video conference.

Addenda:

Addendum 1: Description of facilities and key personnel

Addendum 2: Details of standing orders for the assessment and treatment of common clinical issues.

References:

1. Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations (2002) pp. 36-37. Published by United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service.
2. The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals 8th Edition (2011), National Academies Press, Washington DC
3. Silverman, J., Suckow, M.A., Murthy, S eds. (2014) The IACUC Handbook Third Edition p. 625. Published by Taylor & Francis.
4. AWAR §2.33(2). Each research facility shall ensure that the attending veterinarian has appropriate authority to ensure the provision of adequate veterinary care and to oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care and use.