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OHSU's Lab Accreditation Should be Revoked for Breaking Federal Law More Than Other U.S. Facilities, Charges National Watchdog

PORTLAND, OR – Oregon Health & Science University/Oregon Primate Research Center has the worst record in the U.S. for violating federal animal laws and policies, a national watchdog is demanding that a private inspection service revoke the Oregon laboratory's accreditation.

Although OHSU is “accredited” by AAALAC (American Association for the Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care), the watchdog is revealing AAALAC collects fees from facilities it purports to regulate, creating a potential conflict-of-interest. According to the AAALAC annual report filed with the IRS, 95 percent of its income comes from those facilities

According to AAALAC's own website, application fees range from \$4,600 - \$16,000 with annual fees ranging from \$3,200 - upwards of \$11,000.

However, SAEN (Stop Animal Exploitation NOW!), an Ohio-based national watchdog that monitors the nation's research facilities for illegal activities and animal abuse, is claiming by AAALAC's own standards, OHSU should lose its coveted accreditation for excessive violations of multiple federal regulations.

AAALAC standards require: “The accreditable unit shall observe any and all statutes and governmental regulations which bear upon animal care . . .”

According to SAEN, OHSU leads the U.S. with 21 U.S. Dept of Agriculture violations from February, 2017 to January, 2021. Eleven of the violations are the most serious CRITICAL/DIRECT variety, and four are repeat violations. Critical or direct violations appear in only two percent of USDA inspection reports annually.

OHSU's USDA violations include killing two monkeys by running them through a cage washer, two marmoset primate deaths due to brain abscesses, five voles deaths from dehydration. OHSU was also cited for allowing a ferret to become so ill that the head had a “strong foul odor” and a “crusty exudate.”

Other reports document two monkeys deaths from entrapment, two monkeys were found unresponsive and one death due to insulin overdoses, a baboon's hand was fractured, another monkey's tail was amputated, yet another monkey was denied pain relief, — only a partial violations list.

In addition to the violations in USDA inspection reports, OHSU has also filed 16 non-compliance reports with the National Institutes of Health's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, admitting unnecessary mouse deaths due to dehydration, botched rat euthanasia, and multiple protocol suspensions — only a partial violations list.

“If any lab in the entire nation should have their accreditation revoked, it is OHSU,” said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., SAEN co-founder. “In terms of documented federal violations no one else is even close.”

AAALAC accreditation has become a major issue because according to a recent Science magazine article the accreditation can garner limited inspections under a previously secret USDA policy. <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2021/05/usda-now-only-partially-inspects-some-lab-animal-facilities-internal-documents-reveal>