DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
South Texas Veterans Health Care System
San Antonio, Texas 78229-4404

Research Service Policy Memorandum 16-10

February 1, 2016

RESEARCH STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)
ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM
Veterinary Care

1. PURPOSE: To outline the provision of veterinary care within the Veterinary Medical Unit

2. POLICY: The South Texas Veterans Health Care System will insure the provision of required veterinary care for the animals maintained within the Veterinary Medical Unit.

3. ACTION:

a. **VETERINARY MEDICAL CONSULTANT (VMC) APPOINTMENT:**

(1) This veterinary care will be provided by a Veterinary Medical Consultant through a contract with the University of Texas, Health Science Center at San Antonio's Department of Laboratory Animals.

(2) The VMC will have a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Medical Doctor from an AVMA-approved school of veterinary medicine.

(3) **The VMC must meet one of the following as evidence of training/experience:**

(a) Be an ACLAM diplomate:
(b) Completed at least 2 years of formal postdoctoral or residency training in laboratory animal medicine in a training program approved by ACLAM
(c) Have at least 4 years of on-the-job training and experience as a laboratory animal veterinarian at an institution with biomedical research program involving laboratory animals.

(4) The Chief, Research and Development Officer (VA HQ) or designee must concur on the VMC appointment.

(a) VMC Supervisory Controls. Locally the VMC is supervised by the ACOS for Research and Development.

(b) VMC Role. The VMC has the authority to provide medical treatment to laboratory animals at his/her discretion. He/She has full access to all animals and animal procedure areas in the VMU. The VMC's primary duties include, but are not limited to:

1. Directing the operation of the animal facility to ensure compliance with current animal welfare laws, regulations, and policies to support R&D programs using animal subjects, including husbandry, surgical, postsurgical activities.

2. Providing professional guidance and technical support to the investigators in planning, executing, and directing R&D research activities with animals. This

includes, but is not limited to, the procedures for handling, sedating, anesthetizing, and euthanizing animals; surgery and pre- and post-operative care; and providing analgesia.

3. Monitoring the surveillance, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases in laboratory animals, and overseeing the disease control/quarantine programs.

4. Serving as a member of IACUC

5. Performing mandatory veterinary consultations with investigators prior to the submission of their animal protocol forms and observing surgical procedures if indicated.

6. Participate in semiannual IACUC inspections.

7. Guides preparation for accreditation and compliance site visits.

8. Serve as expert on animal research regulations during IACUC meetings.

9. Advises the VMU Supervisor for issues related to animal care and use.

10. Review requests for equipment and renovation.

b. FREQUENCY **OF VETERINARY VISITS:** The VMC will make regular visits to the VMU at least two times per week. Situations creating a need for veterinary oversight may determine the timing of visits.

c. **AFTER HOURS, WEEKEND, AND HOLIDAY VETERINARY COVERAGE:** On-call coverage will be provided by the VMC or the assigned on-call veterinarian at the University of Texas, Health Science Center.

4. REFERENCES: None

5. RESPONSIBILITY: ACOS for Research and Development

6. RECISSIONS: Research Service Memorandum 12-10, November 15, 2012.

7. RECERTIFICATION: January 2021

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ACOS Research and Development