OHSU again targeted by PETA, stands ready to answer all claims

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Portland - Oregon Health & Science University today learned that PETA is planning a press conference on Tuesday, November 13 to make claims about OHSU's Oregon National Primate Research Center. The press conference is expected to include a former OHSU employee. This is the second time in the past seven years that OHSU's primate center has been targeted from by an animal activist group using this tactic. In the previous case, the employee who made claims of abuse was a longtime PETA employee who was charged with taking jobs in research labs with the goal of damaging the reputation of institutions that conduct animal studies.

PETA is expected to make claims about the care of animals at the Oregon National Primate Research Center during a press conference. OHSU will respond to all of the specific allegations when they become available, but it is important to know that the claims come on the heels of an outstanding evaluation report by the primate center's accrediting body, AAALAC (the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International).

Just one week ago today, AALAC announced full accreditation for the primate center, which followed an earlier commendation for well-maintained facilities and records, dedicated staff, and effective university animal care oversight. Accreditation involves an exhaustive inspection of animal care spaces and labs over a period of several days. With this latest announcement, the primate center has been accredited continuously by AAALAC for the past 32 years.

These allegations also come on the heels of an international media campaign by PETA earlier this year. In the winter of 2007, PETA made claims about research being conducted in sheep. As a result of work by OHSU researchers, these claims were later revealed to be false by reporters at the New York Times, Time Magazine, The Guardian (UK) and ABC News.

The new claims about the primate center are expected to follow a similar pattern to the animal activist campaign of 2000, when Matt Rossell, a current employee of the animal activist group In Defense of Animals-Portland and a longtime PETA investigator, made claims of abuse at the primate center after working there. A two month investigation by the United States Department of Agriculture cleared the primate center of any wrongdoing and no fines or penalties were issued.

"OHSU's primate center has an outstanding record of animal care," explained Dan Dorsa, Ph.D., vice-president of research. "Twice a year the federal government conducts unannounced inspections. These inspections repeatedly demonstrate the hard work and dedication of our animal care staff. Our employees truly care about these animals and the records show this year after year."

*Streaming video of rhesus macaques' corral at the Oregon National Primate Research Center

*Streaming video of sheltered housing for the rhesus macaques at the Oregon National Primate Research Center

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