

VAMHCS ANIMAL and LAB “NEWS and NOTES”



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Introducing the **VAMHCS Office of Research Compliance (ORC)**
and
Our new series of animal and laboratory research updates
Animal and Lab “News and Notes”

VAMHCS Office of Research Compliance (ORC)

In October 2008, the VA Office of Research & Development (ORD) mandated that each VA Medical Center with a research program establish an Office of Research Compliance (ORC) under the Medical Center Director.

The VAMHCS Office of Research Compliance oversees the conduct of human, animal and laboratory studies. We achieve this through routine inspections, “for cause” audits, investigation of complaints and allegations of noncompliance, and post approval monitoring (PAM). ORO has established guidelines and tools for conducting audits on a routine bases. All studies must be audited on a rotating basis every three years.

If you conduct animal studies, you may be familiar with “post approval monitoring” (PAM) program that has been conducted by the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Animal Care and Use Office (UM SOM ACUO) for approximately 2 years. Through this program, the ACUO is required to audit 5% of VA animal protocols.

However, once the VAMHCS ORC program is in full swing, 33% of VA studies (animal and laboratory) will be audited every year. ORC audits are in addition to those required by UM SOM IACUC.

Another major function of the VAMHCS ORC is education of research staff in the proper conduct of research projects.

Animal and Lab "News and Notes"

If you conduct research in the VA, in VA-leased space, with VA funding, on VA-paid time and/or using VA participants, you are required to conduct those studies in accordance with VA handbooks and policies, with UM SOM IACUC, UMB IRB and UM IBC policies, and with VAMHCS and Research Service policies.

It is the obligation of the ORC to educate investigators and staff in the proper conduct of studies. We will accomplish this through our new newsletter **Animal and Lab "News and Notes"**, emails, seminars, webpage content and other announcements as necessary. It is the obligation of investigators and staff to read these notices and attend seminars. This will help you to conduct good research and to assure a smooth audit.

Animal and Lab "News and Notes" will bring you information relevant to work performed in the laboratory as well as studies involving the use of animals. Some editions will focus on animal issues while others may focus on lab issues. Please take a few minutes to review each newsletter to see if any information would be helpful to you or your coworkers. Retain the newsletters as reference material or remember to access them in the "News and Notes" archive on the Research Service website. (The website is currently being updated. A notice will be coming soon as **"News and Notes"** is available at the site.)

If you have any suggestions for future newsletters or if you know of colleagues who should be on the distribution list for **Animal and Lab "News and Notes"**, please let me know.

If you have questions or suggestions for the ORC, please stop by 3A-125, or call one of the numbers below or email us at the following addresses. You can also obtain useful information through the Research Service website at <http://www.maryland.research.va.gov/>.

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