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July 21, 2022

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AMP Statement on the Continued Need for Animal Studies in Dogs in Light of Highly Publicized Canine Breeding Facility Closure

News coverage of the closure of a Virginia facility that breeds dogs for human and veterinary health research has prompted numerous questions from the public. Many Americans want to know why research in canines takes place, how often these studies occur and why there are no alternatives. Below is a statement from Americans for Medical Progress in response to some of the most commonly asked questions.

AMP Statement

The closure of a Virginia facility that breeds dogs for health research and the continued need for studies in dogs are two entirely separate issues. One is unrelated to the other. The study of canines absolutely remains necessary for the following reasons:

- Studies in dogs frequently help ensure new medications developed for human and animal use are safe and do not pose serious health risks. We simply must be as certain as possible that the medicines we ingest or provide to our loved ones will not cause harm. But research in dogs is far from the first step in this incredibly important process. These tests typically begin in cell cultures and in computer models. Once these non-animal assessments are completed and initial safety indications are met, tests in rodents then take place. Barring any problems in these small animal models, an assessment in a larger animal species comes next. When this step is finally reached, dogs are often required because canines provide highly meaningful data that has been clearly shown to translate to human health use.
- Certain conditions, some forms of cancer and also heart disease, impact both dogs and humans alike. As a result, data gathered from research in canines helps combat these health problems in both species.
- Dogs sometimes play a critical role in pharmacokinetics (PK) studies. These studies explain how living systems process medications once ingested. They provide important information about drug absorption, distribution and the eventual elimination of these compounds by the body. Because of their importance, these studies must also take place in species that provide highly meaningful data for human health use.
- Finally, the development of new veterinary treatments for dogs logically requires canine studies. Simply put, you must study dogs in order to develop new medical treatments for them.

Because of our nation's collective desire, both in and outside of the health research community, to only study dogs when there are simply no other options, several controls are in place to ensure all other alternatives are utilized before research in canines is allowed. These alternatives include studies in other species (rats and mice) and research using non-animal methods such as computer models, tissue cultures and organs-on-a-chip. As a result of our nation's commitment to limit research in dogs, less than .05 percent of all health studies occur in canines.

The overwhelming consensus within the international biomedical research community is that animal research remains necessary in order for continued medical advancements. Despite this reality, several animal rights organizations are attempting to leverage news coverage of the Virginia facility's closure to mislead the public about canine research. Many of these claims are false.

An immediate end to all research in dogs would have serious, negative impacts for both humans and animals. Veterinary medical advancements being developed for dogs naturally require the study of dogs to design and test these interventions. Ending these studies would stall ongoing and future advancements for our pets. There are also select disease research areas where our only option is research in canines. As a result, ending these studies would prematurely halt advancement and abandon hope of future breakthroughs for countless patients and their families.

Americans for Medical Progress has created an FAQ for research organizations to assist them in responding to common questions about health research in dogs. Contact us to obtain access. This document can also be found on the [AMP Partner Resources Portal](#).

About Americans for Medical Progress

[Americans for Medical Progress](#) (AMP) is a nonprofit, health research advocacy group that supports the advancement of human and animal medicine through responsible and highly regulated research in animals. AMP informs the public about animal-based research through outreach events like [Biomedical Research Awareness Day](#), news and opinion articles, social media interactions and various online and printed publications. AMP is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charity supported by the nation's top universities, private research facilities, research-related businesses, scientific and professional societies, as well as by foundation grants and contributions by individuals. AMP's Board of Directors is composed of physicians, researchers, veterinarians and university officials.

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