

NEWS RELEASE



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UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

FOR THE GOOD HEALTH OF NEVADA

School of Medicine Signs Declaration of Support for Animal Research

Lynette Hein and Lynne Williams, medical school information
June 2, 1992

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The University of Nevada School of Medicine has joined the more than 200 organizations -- representing 47 million people -- who have signed a declaration of support of "Celebrate the Connection," a public education campaign aimed to emphasize the crucial role biomedical research plays in saving lives. "Celebrate the Connection" is scheduled to take place on June 10 in Washington, D.C. The Saving Lives Coalition¹, in conjunction with the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), is spearheading the event to take place on Capitol Hill.

"If animal research is stopped, lives will be lost that could have been saved," says Dr. Robert M. Daugherty, Jr., dean of the medical school. "The value of animal research has been demonstrated over and over again as we develop treatments for diabetes, search for treatments for AIDS and Alzheimer's disease, learn how to improve the success of transplant surgery -- and most recently, create the breakthroughs we're seeing in cystic fibrosis and Parkinson's disease."

The School of Medicine ranks as one of the most successful research entities of the University of Nevada system. Research focusing on scientific and clinical

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problems that affect Nevada in particular and the nation in general is conducted by the school's faculty and students. The school's scientist have earned nation and international recognition by the scientific community. Research funding at the medical school in 1990-91 topped \$3.8 million and came from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and other national, regional and local sources.

Researchers at the School of Medicine have achieved major breakthroughs in fetal cell transplantation and the discovery of microscopic protein channels within the cells of the heart. On-going research projects may lead to better diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the digestive tract, AIDS, cancer and cardiovascular disease, premature labor, as well as a better understanding of the effects of stress on the body. The medical school operates a kidney transplant program at University Medical Center in Las Vegas, where Nevada's first transplant surgery took place on Christmas Day 1989.

"Computer models cannot duplicate whole organ systems and their reactions," says Dr. Daugherty. "The only alternatives to animal research are to stop research that might save lives, or to test potential treatments directly on humans -- something no responsible researcher, doctor or patient would want."

"Celebrate the Connection" will highlight people from across the country whose lives have been saved or improved because of animal research. Joining them will be the physicians who treat them and the researchers who make the treatments possible. The day is a testament to the fact that the majority of American support responsible use of animals in biomedical research.

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Attached is a copy of the declaration signed by the University of Nevada School of Medicine. For additional information on this release, contact Lynette Hein in Las Vegas at 383-2638 or Lynne Williams in Reno at 784-6003.

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1. The Saving Lives Coalition is composed of national health voluntary and disease-related organizations and associations; health professions schools, teaching hospitals, and academic associations; scientific, medical and behavioral professional societies; organizations of state and grassroots coalitions; and health, biomedical and academic coalitions. Its goal is to educate the public about the important role of animal research in medical progress and the benefits of biomedical and behavioral research.

Joan Hartman Moore is the Director of Public Relations at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and can be reached at (202) 828-0455.

STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTARY HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

We, the representatives of the undersigned professional and voluntary health organizations, wish to reaffirm our support for the continued humane use of animals in biomedical and behavioral research, testing and education. We ask that the point of view of the patients, the health care provider and the researcher be considered in the public discussion on the use of animals in biomedical research and testings.

We reject the characterization of animal research as unnecessary, for we have seen the life-saving and life-enhancing benefits of such research. We recognize that there is much to be learned from animal experimentation that cannot be achieved in other ways. Thus, we take strong exception to the position of those people who would impede medical progress toward relieving human and animal suffering by halting research with animals.

The abandonment of animal research would be an abrogation of our primary responsibility -- to try to save human lives -- and to our responsibilities to save and improve animal lives as well.

Should animal research be lost to the scientific community, the victims would not be the scientists. The victims would be all people; ourselves, our families, our neighbors, our fellow humans. Human life is at stake; human suffering is at issue.

While great strides have been made in the understanding, prevention and treatment of diseases, there still is much to be learned. Much of that research relies on laboratory animals.

We support only the highest standards of animal care and we encourage the use of all appropriate research methods, including cell and tissue cultures and computer models. However, only one type of research has been under attack consistently. Animal research has been the target of a very public campaign by activists who dismiss its importance to scientific progress.

We call upon all Americans to recognize the importance of the use of animals to continued progress in biomedical research. We ask that the perspective of those of us who suffer from diseases and conditions, those who hope to alleviate that suffering, and those who enjoy good health because of past progress be heard in the public debate on this issue. Our hope for a brighter medical future may well hang in the balance.