

## Letter from 225 Michigan Physicians: End Public Funding of Painful, Useless Dog Experiments

Oct. 10, 2019

The Honorable Lee Chatfield  
Speaker of the House  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Mike Shirkey  
Majority Leader of the Senate  
P.O. Box 30016  
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Christine Greig  
House Democratic Leader  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Jim Ananich  
Senate Democratic Leader  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Speaker Chatfield, Majority Leader Shirkey, Rep. Greig, and Sen. Ananich:

As Michigan physicians, we are writing to request that the House of Representatives and the Senate take action to end the wasteful and cruel use of dogs in experiments at Wayne State University. You can achieve this by passing HB 5090, which was introduced this week by Rep. Sara Cambensy and referred to the House Agriculture Committee.

The experiments at Wayne State are supposed to examine human cardiovascular disease. Yet the experimenters have nothing to show for decades of work, millions of dollars in taxpayer money spent, and hundreds of dogs killed. Meanwhile, heart disease is the leading cause of death in our state, and 2.9 million Michiganders are expected to be suffering from heart disease by 2030. Our patients, your constituents, deserve better.

During some of the experiments at Wayne State, dogs undergo multiple surgeries in which devices, cables, and wires are implanted in their bodies. The dogs are then forced to run on treadmills before they are killed. As many as one out of every four dogs dies during or after surgery—before the experiments are completed—because procedures are so invasive and dangerous. All of the dogs who make it through the experiments are later killed.

Since 1991, Wayne State has requested and received \$11.6 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for these experiments. NIH justifies this massive expenditure by simply stating that the number of papers published by the lead experimenter “suggests a productive research career.”

In contrast, human-based studies, as well as cell-based and computer-based research methods, mean that dogs are unnecessary for human health research. For cardiovascular disease, the Framingham Heart Study is a prime example of human-relevant research. The study, conducted since 1948, has included thousands of people across the country and resulted in several major

medical findings. In addition, other researchers use diseased hearts from patients undergoing transplants or hearts donated for research to collect human-relevant data.

After all of these years—after so much wasted money and so much suffering—it is time for Michigan’s elected officials to stand up for patients. We urge you to prohibit the use of dogs in painful experiments at publicly funded institutions and encourage human-relevant research.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Very truly,

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