Clinical Veterinarian Authority

Purpose:
This document is intended to clarify the authority of the clinical veterinarians at the University of California Davis who are responsible for the clinical care of teaching and research animals. For the purposes of this document the clinical veterinarian will be defined as the Attending Veterinarian (AV) or designee (veterinary staff from TRACS Veterinary Services, CNPRC, or VMTH Field Service).

Background:
The clinical veterinarian has the authority per the USDA Animal Welfare Act (AWA), the Institute for Laboratory Animal Research Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (The Guide) and in compliance with Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care guidelines to provide adequate veterinary care.
The AWA states “Each research facility shall assure that the attending veterinarian has appropriate authority to ensure the provision of adequate veterinary care and to oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care and use”.
The Guide states “The institution must provide the AV [Attending Veterinarian] with sufficient authority, including access to all animals, and resources to manage the program of veterinary care.” And “There should be a timely and accurate method for communication of any abnormalities in or concerns about animal health, behavior, and well-being to the veterinarian or the veterinarian’s designee. … For animals on research protocols, the veterinarian or veterinarian’s designee should make every effort to discuss any problems with the principal investigator or project director to jointly determine the most appropriate course of treatment or action.” The Guide also states “…if the investigator and veterinary staff cannot reach consensus on treatment, the veterinarian must have the authority, delegated by senior administration and the IACUC, to treat the animal, remove it from the experiment, institute appropriate measures to relieve severe pain or distress, or perform euthanasia if necessary.”

Policy:
All clinical veterinarians responsible for the veterinary care of the teaching and research animals have the authority to treat any animal that needs immediate care to preserve life or alleviate pain, which may include euthanasia. Exceptions may include IACUC approved projects with death as an endpoint or unalleviated pain/distress or deviations from the IACUC Humane Endpoints policy.
The clinical veterinarian or veterinary technician will make a reasonable effort to contact the investigator or their designee prior to administering analgesics, antibiotics, diagnostics, treatments or euthanasia. It is important for investigators to promptly respond to all veterinary communication. If the animal is deemed stable by the clinical veterinarian then a plan for further monitoring or intervention (such as implementing analgesics, antibiotics, diagnostics, etc.) as needed will be instituted.
Upon finding a sick or injured animal, husbandry or laboratory staff will notify the appropriate clinical veterinary
service specified in the Animal Care and Use Protocol (such as TRACS Veterinary Services, CNPRC, or VMTH Field Service). The animal will then be assessed by a clinical veterinarian or a veterinary technician in consultation with a clinical veterinarian. The clinical veterinarian or a veterinary technician may euthanize an animal found to be moribund or in severe pain or distress after attempting to contact the investigator or their designee.

**References:**

2. Institute for Laboratory Animal Research Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Eight Edition, pp 14 & 114
3. Lab Animal 2015; 44(01)

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**Contact**

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