ANIMAL TRACKS
A newsletter for the Duke research community
http://vetmed.duhs.duke.edu

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FOUNDATIONS FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH BILLBOARDS & POLLING

The Foundation for Biomedical Research (FBR) has announced success with the "RatHer" billboard campaign. The signs have gone up in Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Chicago and soon in the Madison, WI area. Over the last several months, FBR conducted more than 80 Grand Rounds presentations and independent focus groups with more than 300 men and women. Of the five billboard creative concepts developed by FBR, the RatHer concept received an 87% approval rating from the biomedical community & 92% from focus groups.

The billboards have received substantial earned media coverage including local TV, news, radio and blogs as well as national (ABC News and CBS). Email traffic to FBR has also been positive with 85% of emails being positive. Most importantly, the billboards have people talking. They have been the subject of talk radio programs and honest debate. Traffic impressions from the billboards now exceeds 1.1 million vehicles.

FBR also reports that public support for animal use in research now stands at 53%. Since FBR's polling efforts began in August of 2009, public support has fluctuated between 50-60%. The March tracking poll surveyed 1,956 adults with a margin of error of 2.3%. Support among Republicans stands at 64.9% while support among Democrats is now at 38.3%. The highest support by region was the South with 68% and the lowest was the Great Lakes region with 42.9%. Support of animal based research among women fell to 42.7%.

These results, if nothing else, mean we need to tell our friends and neighbors why animals are critical to the success of medical investigation! Who have you talked to today?

IS IT WLALW OR WWAIL? (OR DOES IT MATTER)

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has released several billboards opposing the use of animals in research. The campaign 'If you call it medical research ...' has been used across the country and has targeted college campuses. According to a PETA press release, "Animal Tests Are Today's Tuskegee Experiments."

Stop Animal Experimentation Now! (SAEN), a self-avowed animal rights organization announced several planned demonstrations for World Laboratory Animal Liberation Week (WLALW). In Defense of Animals, another animal rights organization announced that for World Week for Animals in Laboratories (WWAIL), they were providing sample letters to the editor and other information to individuals who wished to obtain assistance in expressing their points of view concerning animal abuse in research, testing, or teaching. By either designation, the effort remains the same—a focused period where demonstrations and other events are held to foster the position of these and similar groups.

In a March 23 HSUS website announcement, Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) supporters were urged to take action by sending an automatically-generated, non-editable message to the presidents of 400 federally-funded schools selected by HSUS. Although those sending messages may select a university to which their connection "will be highlighted," HSUS noted that "your letter will sent to the full list of university presidents."
In a legal complaint sent to the district attorneys for Suffolk and Hampden counties, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) requested that authorities investigate and pursue criminal animal cruelty charges against Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Baystate Medical Center in Springfield. PCRM's complaint alleges that the hospitals' trauma courses using animals "violate Massachusetts' animal cruelty law, which does not exempt medical training."

According to media reports, the Suffolk district attorney's office is reviewing the complaint and potentially relevant statutes and case law in other jurisdictions.

The filing of the complaint marks the second time PCRM has asked for criminal animal cruelty charges to be filed against institutions using animals in medical training.

In February of this year, PCRM sent requests to the state attorneys for Baltimore and Montgomery County asking their offices to investigate and pursue criminal animal cruelty charges against the medical schools at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) respectively. As of today no charges have been filed against JHU and the Montgomery County State Attorney's Office has indicated that since USUHS is a federal entity it is outside the jurisdiction of the attorney's office.

In other actions, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) Legislative Fund has reported that the Great Ape Protection Act (GAPA) will soon be reintroduced in the 112th Congress. Despite the fact that the National Research Council's Institute of Medicine is now studying the need for chimpanzees in biomedical research, as requested by the last Congress, PCRM is gearing up its campaign supporting the legislation that would end the research use of great apes in the U.S.
Dear Colleagues,

As partner organizations that recognize and support the benefits of animal-based research, we are writing to make you aware of a set of disturbing communications this week from a Florida-based animal rights extremist group ‘Negotiation Is Over’ (NIO). We also wish to encourage you to join us in speaking out for research and against a chilling and deplorable threat to the incoming generation of scientists.

This past week, NIO posted on its website encouragement for a new tactic against animal research—targeting university students who plan to enter the health sciences field. Here are two excerpts:

"Every time a vivisector’s car or home — and, eventually, the abuser him/herself — blows up, flames of liberation light up the sky. And now we have a golden opportunity to begin to destroy the foundations upon which Bogus Big Pharma and the academic-industrial complex rest — the vivisection research model can be made unworkable and obsolete. A strategic and streamlined above-ground resistance advanced in coordination with that of our anonymous underground counterparts can yield that elusive point of critical mass at which the infrastructure begins to implode and the grant money stolen from taxpayers begins to dry up — the only remnant of the atrocities being the trail of blood from the cages to the incinerator to the parking lot to the vivisectors’ homes, adorned with windows that can be opened and doors with locks that can be picked."

"[Students] also are the next generation and it is our responsibility to ensure that they are the last generation. Unless we intercede now, the students of today will be the mutilators of tomorrow. Conversely, there will be no animal torturers tomorrow if we effectively eliminate them today."

NIO illustrates its proposed tactic by telling of its first "success" story: the coercion of a Florida Atlantic University science student away from a research career. What NIO fails to disclose is that this student's public statement was made only after an intense 24 hours of threatening emails, phone calls and other forms of harassment by the group's leader.

Speaking of Research has posted its response to NIO's violent urgings. That post may be read here: [http://speakingofresearch.com/2011/03/30/a-new-low-at-nio/](http://speakingofresearch.com/2011/03/30/a-new-low-at-nio/). We invite you to visit the blog and to share supportive comments for the student who was targeted.

But there is much more we need to do to combat this heinous tactic. We’re attaching our broad guidance for informing and protecting students in light of NIO’s threats. You may wish to pass it along to your member institutions. The experts at our three research advocacy organizations are available to you for suggestions on how your organization can effectively support those who are studying for careers in the life sciences. Our websites offer many information resources and ideas about ways to get involved in the kind of proactive public education and engagement that is essential to building public understanding of the vital role animal research plays in scientific and medical progress.

Please join us in standing against this current threat and those who would stop vital animal research.
RESOURCES

Our three organizations are committed to assisting individual institutions through private consultations, outreach materials, media training, speaking engagements, security contacts and other resources. Be sure to see our attached paper “Harm and Intimidation by Animal Rights Radicals: Protecting and Informing Students.” Here’s how to reach us:

Americans for Medical Progress  Pro-Test for Science  Speaking of Research
amp@amprogress.org  Pro-Test-for-Science@gmail.com  Tom@SpeakingofResearch.com

A number of widely-read science bloggers have written about NIO’s campaign, including:
Pharyngula, P.Z. Myers
http://scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2011/03/students_are_soft-bellied_targ.php
http://scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2011/03/nio_is_doomed_now.php
Orac, Respectful Insolence
http://scienceblogs.com/insolence/2011/03/the_animal_rights_movement_may_have_over.php
Dr. Isis, On Becoming a Domestic and Laboratory Goddess
http://scienceblogs.com/isisthescientist/2011/03/animal_rights_terrorists_are_c.php
Dr. Free-Ride, Janet Stemwedel
http://scientopia.org/blogs/ethicsandscience/2011/03/30/on-the-targeting-of-undergraduates-by-
animal-rights-extremists-and-the-dangers-of-victim-blaiming/
Ohio State University, which has a strong history of challenging false or threatening rhetoric by animal extremists, has posted an item on its research blog further condemning NIO’s statements.
http://researchnews.osu.edu/blog/?p=979

For security reasons, we advise you not to access the Negotiation Is Over website. We will provide full texts of relevant posts upon request.

Here are a few general online resources. Contact us for more to meet your specific needs:
AMP—Research Facts: http://www.amprogress.org/animal-research
AMP—Advocacy Materials: http://www.amprogress.org/AMP_materials
SR—AR Extremism: http://speakingofresearch.com/extremism-undone/ar-extremism/
SR—Advocacy: http://speakingofresearch.com/get-involved/
SR—The UK Experience: http://speakingofresearch.com/about/the-uk-experience/
Society for Neuroscience—Best Practices for Protecting Researchers and Research:
AAALAC International—links on animal research: http://www.aaalac.org/resources/studentinfo.cfm
California National Primate Research Center: http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/onprc/caring/index.cfm
Oregon National Primate Research Center: http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/onprc/caring/index.cfm