



September 13, 2024

The Honorable Tina Kotek
Governor of Oregon
c/o Genevieve Ziebell
Scheduler and Executive Assistant to the Governor

Via e-mail: Governor.Kotek@oregon.gov; Genevieve.J.Ziebell@oregon.gov

Dear Governor Kotek:

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally—regarding the use of live animals in the obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN) physician residency training program at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). **Based on the information presented below and in light of your pending appointment of a new chair of OHSU's Board of Directors (BOD), we respectfully urge you to appoint someone who will ensure that OHSU ends this invasive and deadly practice, which is out of sync with dozens of peer OB/GYN physician residency training programs that don't use live animals, deprives future healthcare professionals of a quality human-relevant education, and taints the reputation of OHSU as a leading educational institution in Oregon.**

Records Confirm the Use of Live Animals in OHSU's OB/GYN Residency

Records show that from 2019 to 2021, at least 64 students in OHSU's OB/GYN physician residency training program participated in five laboratory exercises^{1,2,3} that involved repeatedly cutting into up to 48 live female pigs to perform invasive practice surgeries.^{4,5,6,7}

¹OHSU. USDA and porcine OB/GYN data 2021. Accessed March 5, 2024.

<https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/USDA-and-Porcine-ObGyn-Data-2021-redacted.pdf>

²OHSU. USDA and porcine OB/GYN data 2020. Accessed March 5, 2024.

<https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/USDA-and-Porcine-ObGyn-Data-2020-redacted.pdf>

³OHSU. USDA and porcine OB/GYN data 2021. Accessed March 5, 2024.

<https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/USDA-and-Porcine-ObGyn-Data-2021-redacted.pdf>

⁴OHSU. IACUC Protocol IP00817. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/IACUC-protocol-IP00817.pdf-redacted.pdf>

⁵OHSU. High fidelity simulation-manikin based ObGyn post-partum skills. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ObGyn-Curriculum-HighFidelity.pdf>

⁶OHSU. OB skills. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OB-Skills-2019-2021-Objectives-and-Equipment-redacted.pdf>

⁷OHSU. Porcine laboratory surgical tasks. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Porcine-Laboratory-Surgical-Tasks-redacted.pdf>

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Other records⁸ show that several pigs used in the program have suffered from abrasions,⁹ “social incompatibility,”¹⁰ cardiac distress,¹¹ “sustained arrhythmia,”¹² abdominal bleed-out,¹³ and other issues. After trainees dissect the animals’ organs in misguided attempts to learn human medicine, any surviving pigs are killed.

Furthermore, OHSU wasted more than \$13,000 to purchase and kill 14 female pigs between March 24, 2022, and April 20, 2023, for its OB/GYN physician residency training.^{14,15,16} These funds could be put to better use by instead acquiring advanced human-relevant simulation models, as many accredited OB/GYN residency training programs have already done.

Newly Obtained E-Mails Show Internal Controversy for OB/GYN Pig Lab

According to public records that PETA recently obtained from OHSU, an individual who appears to be affiliated with the leadership team of the university’s OB/GYN residency program stated, “Let’s set up a meeting to discuss utility of the pig labs. ... I met with chiefs last night and most of them do NOT [*sic*] find the pig lab to be useful.”¹⁷ In addition, after hearing from PETA supporters who urged OHSU to ban the use of live animals in its OB/GYN residency program, the chair of OHSU’s OB/GYN department, Dr. Aaron Caughey, stated in an e-mail on April 28, 2023, “We ([*redacted*] and I) have mixed feelings toward the [live-pig] labs.”¹⁸ In addition, an OB/GYN physician resident at OHSU expressed unwillingness to use live animals in the Surgical Skills Lab, writing, “I do not want to participate in the live porcine [pig] portion.”¹⁹

Dozens of OB/GYN Physician Residency Training Programs Don’t Use Live Animals

OHSU’s reliance on live-animal training methods makes it an outlier among its peer-accredited institutions that opt for more advanced, human-relevant techniques instead. According to PETA’s ongoing survey of OB/GYN residency programs that are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, more than 100 such programs have confirmed that they don’t use live animals in their OB/GYN physician residency training.²⁰

⁸OHSU. Responsive Records. Animal medical records. Accessed March 5, 2024.

<https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Animal-Medical-Records-ohsu-obgyn.pdf>

⁹*Id.* Pages 5, 12, 20, 61, and 67.

¹⁰*Id.* Page 20.

¹¹*Id.* Page 80.

¹²*Id.* Page 87.

¹³*Id.* Page 51.

¹⁴OHSU. Responsive Records. April 6, 2023, Invoice. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2023-04-06-invoice.pdf>

¹⁵OHSU. Responsive Records. April 20, 2023, Invoice. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2023-04-20-invoice.pdf>

¹⁶OHSU. Responsive Records. March 24, 2022, Invoice. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2022-03-24-invoice.pdf>

¹⁷OHSU. Responsive Records. Correspondence re OB/GYN residency program. April 28, 2023. Accessed May 6, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/email-re-utility-of-pig-lab.pdf>

¹⁸OHSU. Responsive Records. Correspondence re OB/GYN residency program. April 28, 2023. Accessed May 6, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/april-28-ohsu-email-caughey.pdf>

¹⁹OHSU. Responsive Records. Correspondence re surgical skills lab. March 24, 2023. Accessed May 6, 2024. https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/resident-not-participating-in-pig-lab_Redacted.pdf

²⁰PETA. Animal use in OB/GYN physician residency training programs in the U.S. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/action/animal-use-in-ob-gyn-physician-residency-training-programs/>

After hearing from PETA, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center wrote to us that “living animal models are no longer utilized in OB/GYN residency training program simulation activities.”²¹ According to records we’ve received, that school had previously used at least 13 pigs in recent OB/GYN training to perform laparoscopic hysterectomies, retroperitoneal dissections, and tissue morcellations.²² Similarly, Aurora Sinai Medical Center²³ and Rush University²⁴—the latter of which received virtual reality software donated by PETA—both ended their use of live animals following talks with us. Furthermore, after discussions with us, Henry Ford Hospital published a new public policy on its webpage stating, “The OB/GYN residency program at Henry Ford Hospital does not use animals for training purposes, and instead uses advanced human patient simulators and other non-animal methods.”²⁵ Even the U.S. Department of Defense has banned the use of live animals for its OB/GYN physician residency training, instead using superior, human-relevant simulators.²⁶

This evidence indicates the growing shift in the field away from relying on crude training methods using live animals and toward using more human-relevant, effective, ethical, and economical animal-free models. For the sake of pigs, patients, and physicians in Portland, we hope you’ll appoint a board chair who will ensure that OHSU immediately adopts a public policy prohibiting the use of live animals in its OB/GYN physician residency training program in favor of superior animal-free methods.

You can contact me at ShriyaS@peta.org. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely yours,



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²¹UT Southwestern. Response confirming no live animals used. August 15, 2023. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2023-08-15-no-live-animals-used.pdf>

²²UT Southwestern. Responsive Records. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2022-12-14-responsive-records-ut-southwestern.pdf>

²³PETA. Hospital swaps live pigs for tech in OB/GYN training after PETA talks. July 29, 2021. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/blog/victory-aurora-sinai-medical-center-wisconsin-replaces-live-pigs-high-tech-simulators/>

²⁴PETA. OB/GYN residents trade practice on live pigs for high-tech simulators. June 28, 2016. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.peta.org/blog/obgyn-residents-trade-practice-live-pigs-high-tech-simulators/>

²⁵Henry Ford Health. Obstetrics & Gynecology Residency. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.henryford.com/hcp/med-ed/residencies-fellowships/hfh/ob-gyn>

²⁶Kime P. Defense Department to reduce use of live animals for medical training. *Military Times*. November 13, 2014. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.militarytimes.com/2014/11/13/defense-department-to-reduce-use-of-live-animals-for-medical-training/>