

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**

Canine Research Protocols

Date: December 15, 2017

Guidance Document: AR2017-001

For questions on the content of this guidance, email the Office of the Chief Veterinary Medical Officer: Dr. Alice Huang (alice.huang@va.gov) or Dr. Michael Fallon, CVMO (michael.fallon@va.gov)

1. **Summary.** The secondary review process, previously applied only to protocols for VA-funded animal research, is now expanded to include all protocols for canine research on VA property, regardless of funding source. Secondary review is performed by the office of the Chief Veterinary Medical Officer (CVMO), after protocol approval by the station's Institutional Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Changes in approved protocols that require assignment of dogs to USDA categories for greater potential pain or distress must now also be reported promptly to the CVMO's office, but will not be routinely subject to further review.
2. **Background.** IACUC review of animal research protocols has long included in evaluation of whether the use of animals and the choice of species are scientifically necessary, and whether the welfare of the animals is appropriately safeguarded. To address recent public and Congressional concerns about VA canine research, VA is expanding the secondary review mechanism to all canine research performed in VA, as described in Section 3 below.
3. **Issue.** This guidance applies as follows:
 - a. Each local program must ensure that work on any new proposed canine study to be conducted on VA property (any funding source) or funded by VA (any performance site), commences only after (1) the project associated with the canine protocol has local Research and Development Committee approval, (2) the protocol has been approved by the local IACUC, and (3) the Office of the CVMO has completed the secondary review of the protocol.
 - b. Each local program must disclose to the office of the CVMO any IACUC-approved change in a previously approved protocol that requires assignment of dogs to a new USDA category because of greater potential pain or distress, within one week of IACUC approval of the change.

Annual reviews and triennial renewals of previously approved canine studies that do not involve changes in assigned USDA categories because of greater potential pain or distress need not be routinely reported to the CVMO's office.

4. **Requirements.** The local program must provide the IACUC-approved protocol to the office of the CVMO and respond as instructed to the secondary review comments.
5. **Reporting.** Unless documents will be uploaded into the JIT system for a VA-funded project, they are to be sent as attachments by email to Dr. Alice Huang (alice.huang@va.gov) and Dr. Michael Fallon, CVMO (michael.fallon@va.gov).