



Policy on Clinical Health Record Requirements for Animals Used in Research and Instruction

Clinical Health Records (CHRs) are required by USDA-APHIS animal care regulations and guidance provided by the NIH-Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). These regulations emphasize the need for proper documentation of research animal care. More specifically, the emphasis is placed on the record keeping practices for animals under treatment or observation when a variation from normal health and/or behavior exists. These regulatory agencies expect every institution to have a system of health records sufficiently comprehensive to demonstrate the delivery of adequate veterinary care.

At the University of Georgia, CHRs are meant to convey necessary information to all people involved in an animal's care. They can be invaluable in evaluating research outcomes. The Attending Veterinarian's (AV) role is defined by law and UGA policy and include responsibility for ensuring the provision of adequate veterinary care to all animals used for research or instruction. Appropriate CHRs are fundamental to the provision of high-quality veterinary care. It is important that information regarding animal health and welfare is communicated appropriately in CHRs to ensure UGA meets its animal care and use oversight obligations. The AV and University Research Animal Resources (URAR) veterinarians will provide advice and guidance in developing and maintaining clinical health records for all animal species. CHRs are subject to review by URAR personnel, IACUC, USDA-APHIS, and AAALAC, and must be readily available at all times.

Guidance on Clinical Health Records for Mammals other than Mice and Rats Bred for Research Used in Research and Instruction and Guidance on Clinical Health Records for Non-mammals and Mice and Rats Bred for Research Used in Research and Instruction, located under "Forms and Tools" on the Office of Animal Care and Use website, provide details regarding requirements and expectations for CHRs.

General Requirements for CHRs:

- All non-rodent mammalian species used in research and/or instruction must have individual clinical health records
- For rodents and non-mammalian vertebrates (e.g., birds, amphibians, fish, reptiles), group records are acceptable when groups of animals all have similar diagnoses and treatments. However, any animal or subgroup of animals diagnosed, treated, or managed differently from the rest of the group must have its own record.
- Individual CHRs must identify the individual animal on each page
- Information contained in medical records must be in ink, legible, current, consistent with professional veterinary standards, and comprehensive enough to demonstrate the adequacy of veterinary care.
- CHRs for animals for which the URAR veterinary personnel provide the veterinary care or oversight must be accessible to the URAR veterinary personnel. Active paper CHRs must be kept

within the animal facility or farm where the animals are housed or maintained. URAR veterinary personnel must have access to any electronic CHRs.

- CHRs for non-rodent mammals for which the URAR veterinary personnel provide the veterinary care or oversight must be submitted to URAR within 30 days of euthanasia or adoption of individual animals.

References

1. USDA-APHIS-AC Policy #3: Veterinary Care, July 17, 2007.
2. Field K et al. 2007. Medical records for animals used in research, teaching, and testing: public statement from the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine. ILAR J 48(1): 37-41.
3. National Research Council, Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources. Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals. National Academy Press, Washington, DC 2010.