OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR ANIMAL USERS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

The LSU IACUC, through the Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM) operates an Occupational Health & Safety Program (OHSP). The purpose of the program is to maintain an OHSP for personnel involved in the care and use of animals: to obtain an accurate assessment of the health status of each employee prior to working with animals, to help prevent occupation-related disorders, and to help identify emerging occupation-related health disorders, so they can be promptly diagnosed and corrected. Participation in this program is mandatory for all personnel working with LSU-owned animals utilized in teaching, research, and testing. Program participants include facility services personnel, animal caretakers, principal investigators, scientific technical staff, graduate students, student workers, and post-doctoral and visiting scientists. Medical information is maintained as confidential and is retained by the LSU Student Health Center.

PROCEDURE:

To participate in the OHSP, each person who will have contact with animals is required to complete a confidential health questionnaire. In order to provide the most accurate information on the questionnaire, employees should discuss with his/her supervisor any potential physical, chemical, or infectious risks or hazards to which the employee may be exposed while working with animals.

Individuals at increased risk of illness or injury due to drug-related immune suppression, HIV infection, pregnancy, concurrent illness, musculoskeletal problems, etc. are strongly advised to disclose and discuss these risks with the OH&S physician at the LSU Student Health Center, or with their family physician.

A. Program Operation:

1. In consultation with the principal investigating supervisor, each new and continuing animal worker completes an initial health questionnaire and submits it directly to the OH&S physician.

2. Using the information provided in the questionnaire, the OH&S physician reviews and assesses the risks and hazards to which the person may be exposed in the course of carrying out their assigned duties. Each program participant is assigned a risk level (very high, high, moderate, low) indicative of the type and extent of contact with animals or their waste products, as well as other physical, chemical, or microbiological hazards to which they may be exposed in the vivaria.

3. Based on assigned risk level, the OH&S physician may request additional medical information through completion of a medical health questionnaire, and consultation with the program participant, and may perform a physical examination, diagnostic
tests, and/or administer immunizations.

4. The LSU Student Health Center establishes and maintains a medical record for each program participant, and includes in that record, copies of the risk and health questionnaires.

5. The OH&S physician notifies the program participant, their supervisor, and the IACUC, regarding completion of program requirements, as well as clearance of the program participant to perform their assigned animal-related duties.

6. The program participant and supervisor are notified of any restrictions or precautions needed in work assignments.

B. Illness or Injury: All medical conditions, including work-related injuries, must be reported to the program participant’s direct supervisor. The program participant may be required to contact the *Injury Call Center* (1-877-764-3574) for telephone assessment and instruction regarding local medical providers. Severe injuries may be referred to nearby hospitals or emergency services.

C. Use of Personal Physicians: Program participants retain the option to obtain medical care from a private physician under the following conditions:

1. The LSU OHSP medical health questionnaire must be completed and presented to the private physician prior to or at the time of the office visit.

2. Confirmation of the office visit, immunizations administered, and recommendations for work restriction, are to be sent to the LSU Student Health Center.

3. The LSU Student Health Center will establish and maintain a medical record for each program participant, and will include in that record, copies of the risk and health questionnaires.

4. The LSU Student Health Center physician will notify the program participant, their supervisor, and the IACUC, regarding completion of program requirements, as well as clearance of the program participant to perform their assigned animal-related duties.

5. The program participant and supervisor will be notified of any restrictions or precautions needed in work assignments.