

## **FINAL MINUTES**

Task Force on Transparency in Publicly Funded Animal Testing Facilities  
James Monroe Building  
101 N 14th St.  
Richmond, Virginia

Friday, August 30, 2024

The second meeting of the Task Force on Transparency in Publicly Funded Animal Testing Facilities (Task Force) convened at approximately 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 30, 2024, at the James Monroe Building. Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services Joseph Guthrie called the meeting to order.

### **PRESENT**

Joseph Guthrie

Dr. Kristin Pantanzis

Suzanne Griffin

Dr. Annette Hildabrand

Daphna Nachminovitch

Sharon Adams

Will Lowrey

Dr. D. Josh Cohen

Dr. Raphael Malbrue

Aimee Seibert

Megan Rhyne

Corrinne Loudon

Hon. Jennifer Boysko

Hon. Hillary Pugh Kent

Hon. Shelly Simonds

Dr. Robert Corley, III

### **REPRESENTING**

Chair, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

Alternate Vice Chair, State Council of Higher Education in Virginia

R1 University, Virginia Tech

R2 University, James Madison University

Animal Welfare, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Animal Welfare, Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters

Animal Welfare, Animal Partisan

Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee Member, Virginia Commonwealth University

American College of Laboratory Animal Testing Facility Veterinarian, University of Virginia

Virginia Press Association

Virginia Coalition for Open Government

Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council

Senate of Virginia, Senate District 38

Virginia House of Delegates, House District 67

Virginia House of Delegates, House District 70

Historically black colleges and universities replacing R3 University, Virginia State University

### **ABSENT**

Hon. William Stanley, Jr.

Senate of Virginia, Senate District 7

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Kelly Altizer, Associate Director of Operations, Institute for Engagement & Negotiation (IEN)

Dr. Kristina Weaver, IEN

Meredith Keppel, Senior Associate, IEN

Kevin Schmidt, Director, Office of Policy, Planning, and Research, VDACS

Isaac Joseph, Policy Analyst, VDACS

### **INTRODUCTION**

Commissioner Guthrie called the meeting to order and asked that the members of the Task Force reintroduce themselves to each other. Commissioner Guthrie mentioned that written comments submitted to the Task Force would be included in the Task Force's report and that

comments made during the Task Force meetings would be summarized and included in the meeting minutes.

Before the Task Force adopted the meeting minutes from the previous meeting, Dr. Corley, as a representative from Virginia State University that was not present at the previous meeting, was given an opportunity to provide his perspective and answers to the same questions that were posed to members of the Task Force at the previous meeting. The Task Force's next order of business was to review and approve the minutes for the July 26, 2024, meeting. Senator Boysko made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes, and Dr. Annette Hildabrand seconded. The meeting minutes were adopted unanimously by the Task Force.

Kelly Altizer then asked the Task Force to review a meeting summary prepared by IEN that summarized the discussion and points made during the Task Force's July 26, 2024, meeting. The members of the Task Force had no comments, edits, or additions to the meeting summary. Kelly Altizer then reviewed the agenda for the day's meeting.

Before the Task Force broke into small group discussions, Commissioner Guthrie called the Task Force's attention to a report and presentation that Dr. Malbrue had prepared concerning the current reporting requirements of public animal testing facilities. Dr. Malbrue did not give the presentation, but briefly summarized it and copies of the presentation were provided to members of the Task Force.

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The Task Force began the discussion at approximately 9:30 a.m. by breaking out into three separate groups to discuss three separate topics related transparency.

The first group consisted of Senator Boysko, Suzanne Griffin, Will Lowrey, and Aimee Seibert and was facilitated by Meredith Keppel. This group was tasked with discussing what kinds of information are desired by the public. The group discussed the number of animals, the species, the status or disposition of the animals, any adverse events or violations of law, added context for the data reported, and other metrics that might demonstrate progress towards the "3 Rs" (replacement, reduction, refinement). The group then discussed whether existing reports might already contain the information desired.

The second group consisted of Delegate Kent, Dr. Annette Hildabrand, Daphna Nachminovitch, Dr. Josh Cohen, and Megan Rhyne and was facilitated by Kelly Altizer. This group was tasked with discussing the methods for accessing the information desired by the public. The group discussed the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, websites or repositories where existing reports can be accessed, the cost of accessing the information, and whether the burden of reporting could be shifted from researchers.

The third group consisted of Delegate Simonds, Dr. Robert Corley, Corrinne Loudon, Dr. Raphael Malbrue, and Sharon Adams and was facilitated by Dr. Kristina Weaver. This group was tasked with discussing the timing or frequency of information tracking. The group discussed the possibility of providing for a Virginia-specific report or a Virginia-specific database or repository for collecting reported information. The group also discussed the sufficiency of yearly reporting frequency.

### **BREAK**

At approximately 10:20 a.m. the Task Force took a short break and reconvened at approximately 10:40 a.m.

### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

When the Task Force reconvened, each smaller group reported to the larger group the topics and proposals the smaller group had discussed. The discussion was opened to the full Task Force for anyone to add any ideas or comments to the report from each smaller group.

The discussion continued until it concluded at approximately 11:45 a.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

At approximately 11:50 a.m., the Task Force opened to receive public comment from in-person attendees. Three persons provided public comments to the Task Force.

Naomi Charalambakis spoke on behalf of Americans for Medical Progress. Ms. Charalambakis expressed concern that requiring research institutions to report only numbers without context may result in misinterpretation and misuse of that data.

R. Wayne Barbee, a retired biomedical researcher and animal welfare consultant, expressed his opinion that current reporting requirements are sufficient to meet the public's demand for information about animal testing and that he is concerned about the cost-benefit ratio for any new requirements.

Dave Schabdach, from the Office of Research and Innovation at Virginia Tech, expressed concern over the quantity of FOIA requests that public research institutions already receive from the public.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At approximately 12:00 p.m. the Task Force adjourned.