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**USDA Cites Vanderbilt for Illegal surgeries;
Watchdog asks for refund of federal grant monies**

NASHVILLE, TN – SAEN, a national research watchdog organization, has filed documents with the National Institutes of Health and the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services to initiate the process refunding grant monies by Vanderbilt University for performing illegal surgical procedures by unapproved surgeons on non-human primates.

A June, 2011, USDA inspection report cites Vanderbilt repeatedly for the performance of illegal, unapproved and highly invasive brain surgeries on at least one primate by unapproved and unqualified surgeon(s).

The USDA report cites Vanderbilt repeatedly for incidents surrounding experimentation on primate 4414. An unapproved, and botched, surgical procedure was attempted by an unapproved surgeon in September of 2010. Further illegal surgeries and other illegal procedures were performed on the same primate in December of 2010 and April of 2011.

National Institutes of Health Grant Policy states: “In cases where charges have been made for unauthorized animal activities, appropriate adjustments must be made to the grant to remove those charges.”

Additionally, SAEN believes that this is likely not an isolated incident, and has therefore requested an investigation of all primate use at Vanderbilt so that additional incidents of noncompliance with NIH policy may be discovered.

“We believe that the incidents surrounding primate 4414 as reported in the USDA inspection are likely just the tip of the iceberg,” said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., Executive Director, SAEN. “Similar investigations at other universities have netted additional offenders.”

Vanderbilt has a history of violating the Animal Welfare Act, and paid an \$8,156 fine in July of 2010.