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Cleveland Clinic Rogue Lab Staff Caught Smuggling Animals, Breaking Necks of Animals; Watchdog Urges Independent Probe of 'Flawed' Cleveland Clinic Research Program

CLEVELAND, OH – Rogue laboratory staff at the Cleveland Clinic (CC) has been smuggling animals and breaking animals' necks, which has led to the suspension of projects and staff terminations, according to correspondence discovered by a national watchdog group.

Recently uncovered federal reports have come to light as a result of an wide-ranging investigation conducted by SAEN, a Cincinnati-based national watchdog group that monitors U.S. research facilities for illegal activity and animal abuse.

SAEN opened its probe after Cleveland Clinic incident where staff negligently suffocated and killed a mini-pig.

According to SAEN, reports filed with the National Institutes of Health over more than 1 1/2 years document mice smuggled into CC from Case Western, the necks of unanaesthetized animals broken, pain relief being ignored, multiple protocol violations, staff removed from animal use, lab staff terminated and protocols suspended.

SAEN said it has contacted Dr. Delos Cosgrove, President and CEO of Cleveland Clinic, calling for an independent investigation of research administration.

"It is clear that Cleveland Clinic research administration is seriously flawed. Animals are smuggled in from other laboratories, the necks of unanaesthetized animals are broken, pain relief is ignored, protocols are violated, staff is removed from animal use, laboratory staff are terminated and protocols are suspended," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., SAEN co-founder. "Incidents such as this bring into question all research performed at the Cleveland Clinic."