

COMMUNICATION Challenges Met by ANIMAL PROGRAMS DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC

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Animal program Goals During The covid pandemic

- *Generate reproducible, research animal-based data*
- *Provide daily care services to the institution's research animals*
- *Ensure the health and safety of the Animal Program's workforce*
- *Meet animal care and welfare standards listed in industry regulations*
- *Comply with the institution's COVID-19 Response Plan*
- *Conserve the institution's research animal resources*

RESPONSE PLAN COMMUNICATION Challenges

- *Social distancing and mask wearing protocols*
- *Supply chain disruptions*
- *Staff shortages*
- *Research program transitions*
- *COVID-19 vaccination prioritization and processes*

Actions to Improve Response Plan Communications

Establish a specific time for daily or periodic all-hands meetings

Disseminate previously vetted disaster response plans

Establish a COVID-19 related animal program website

Use standard or common terminology in all communications

Actions to improve Response plan communications

Re-affirm who is in charge and maintain clear lines of authority

Re-affirm the Institutional Official's responsibilities and reinforce lines of communication to the Animal Program

Re-affirm Institutional Leader's responsibilities and reinforce lines of communication to the Animal Program

Encourage problem resolution at the lowest level possible

CLOSING Thoughts

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges to the research animal program's ability to meet its goals

We should consider strengthening our disaster response communications programs before we are confronted with another possible major emergency or disaster during this COVID pandemic

The Incident Command System utilizes effective communication strategies that can be implemented by Animal Programs during disasters