Statement from The Scripps Research Institute re: The Importance of Animals in Biomedical Research

La Jolla, CA. April 24, 1993 -- William H. Beers, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, explains The Scripps Research Institute's position on the importance and the humane treatment of animals in research as follows, "Virtually every significant medical and scientific advance that has been achieved in the last 50 years has depended on research with animals. Immunizations against polio and hepatitis; antibiotics for infectious diseases like pneumonia; drugs to control chronic disorders like diabetes and high blood pressure; open heart surgery; pain medications; organ transplantation; medications to treat mental illness and chemotherapy for cancer patients have been developed for the public benefit, in large measure, because of the role of animal studies in scientific inquiry. Most drugs, diagnostic procedures and surgical techniques would not have been possible were it not for the contributions of animal research. These contributions have fundamentally enhanced the quality of human life and dramatically increased human life span.

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Today, scientists at The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) and throughout the country are making further progress against these diseases and others, such as cancer, AIDS, and Alzheimer's disease. To continue this progress, they must have scientific data that are relevant to the problem they are studying. Animals represent the critical link to understanding the complex workings of the human body, the complicated interactions among cells, tissues and organs that occur in humans. Human experimentation before conducting studies in other living animals would be considered unethical and unacceptable.

The overwhelming majority of research performed at TSRI is scientifically reviewed by peers from around the nation. Only the proposals with the highest scores are funded. This intensely competitive process helps ensure scientific merit and only scientifically necessary duplication.

At The Scripps Research Institute, scientists employ a wide range of non-animal research methods when appropriate, including biological models as well as computer modeling. While these approaches are often very effective complements to animal studies, many areas remain where they cannot replace animal research. Often, we can learn in no other way what animals can teach us about life itself and the effects of new medicine on life processes.

The care and treatment of laboratory animals is of great concern to the staff of The Scripps Research Institute. One example of this is the training program required for

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all individuals using animals or directing animal research. This comprehensive training program discusses humane care and use and requires hands on participation for each species of animals utilized. This training program has been used as a model system for other institutions. Every possible precaution is taken to ensure that the care and treatment of laboratory animals at Scripps is proper and humane. In addition to meeting all federal, state and local regulations, TSRI is one of only 550 AAALAC accredited institutions in the world. At the last site visit, a team of inspectors did not identify any deficiencies after a thorough two-day inspection. TSRI strives to maintain the highest quality animal care and use program."

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