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Dear Mr. Barba,

I am an advocate of viable research and training. Thus, I respectfully ask Albany Medical Center to suspend its use of live animals in Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) courses. Emergency medical training is better served by more applicable and humane non-animal systems.

More than 90% of U.S. and Canadian facilities use non-animal models or cadavers in place of old-fashioned animal experiments. The American College of Surgeons no longer recommends animal experimentation in its curriculum.

I urge Albany Medical Center to replace the maiming and killing of pigs with Simulab's TraumaMan, among the most commonly used surgical simulators worldwide. TraumaMan's anatomical human body facilitates practice of lifesaving skills and reduces trainee dropout rates. The American College of Surgeons sanctions TraumaMan for ATLS.

Overall, animal-free research cuts costs and improves proficiency. A timely New England Journal of Medicine article highlights the "very detailed feedback and...more subtle measurement of trainee performance" gained from virtual reality simulators. The article summarizes: Inanimate models are "safe, reproducible, portable, readily available, and...cost-effective."

I encourage you to assess the TraumaMan System or alternatives such as SimMan, a sophisticated patient simulator for team training. Albany is one of the only U.S. teaching labs that still operates on live, anesthetized pigs. These living creatures undergo confinement, transport, isolation and preparation, experiments and slaughter.

Please update Albany Medical Center's trauma-management training with methods more relevant to human anatomy and surgery. Killing live pigs may even violate the federal Animal Welfare Act, given the accessibility of capable and equivalent non-animal technologies.

Thank you,