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Dear William Owen Jr., M.D,

The University of Michigan Health System recently chose to use only simulated models for Advanced Trauma and Life Support (ATLS) courses. I strongly urge University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), to join U-M Medical school — along with more than 90% of U.S. and Canadian facilities that benefit from human-focused simulators alone.

I am surprised University Hospital in Newark, UMDNJ's teaching hospital, still relies upon old-fashioned animal experiments. Emergency medical training is better served by relevant and humane non-animal systems. Please replace the maiming and killing of pigs with Simulab's TraumaMan, among the most commonly used surgical simulators worldwide.

TraumaMan's anatomical body facilitates practice of lifesaving skills and reduces trainee dropout rates. The American College of Surgeons endorses TraumaMan System, SimMan, human cadavers and other synthetic models.

I encourage you to assess sophisticated patient simulators for ATLS courses. UMDNJ is one of the only U.S. teaching labs that still mutilates and discards live pigs. These living creatures undergo confinement, transport, isolation and preparation, experiments and slaughter.

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."

Please update UMDNJ trauma-management training with methods more relevant to human anatomy and surgery. Killing live pigs is no longer viable, given the accessibility of capable and equivalent non-animal technologies.

Thank you,