



David M. Zaslav
President, CEO
Discovery Communications, LLC
DCI World headquarters
One Discovery Place
Silver Spring, MD 20910
240-662-2000

Dear Mr. Zaslav:

The American Veterinary Medical Association has received an outpouring of concern from our members regarding your program [Dr. Jeff Rocky Mountain Vet](#) which features Dr. Jeff and his colleagues performing surgery in an unhygienic manner.

The AVMA applauds Animal Planet, Discovery Channel and Dr. Jeff's commitment to educating the public as to the need for veterinary care in underserved communities. However, we are concerned that this particular program conveys the message that 'lesser-than' care is somehow acceptable for pets in these communities—we strongly disagree. In our experience it is very possible to provide quality care at a reasonable cost without abandoning generally accepted good patient care practices.

The images depicted in ['Dr. Jeff's First Surgery in the New Clinic'](#) (no mask, no gown, clipboard with paper and pens passed over a surgical site and a surgical table surrounded by others not wearing protective gear) don't reflect contemporary veterinary practice. We have received comments ranging from "this is cringe-worthy to anyone who has taken a junior high health class;" to "fast food restaurants require stricter sanitary guidelines than Dr. Jeff."

We understand that part of Dr. Jeff's appeal is his renegade approach to medicine. As he has said himself, he doesn't like to 'be handled' and he got rid of the first season's film crew so he could film twice as many episodes in half the amount of time.

Maintaining minimum sanitary conditions during surgery, such as donning a surgical mask and gown, does not add significantly to the time or cost involved with performing surgical procedures. Surgery is invasive. Exposed tissues present risks for both the patient and the surgical staff.

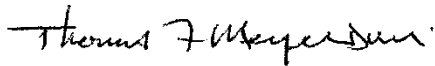
Animal Planet's executive vice president and general manager, Rick Holzman, was quoted as saying, "We are not going to change him, but we can help him not get in the way of his own message."

From the comments we have been receiving, it appears Dr. Jeff's surgical procedures are now getting in the way of his message. High-volume veterinary care does not equate to low-quality veterinary care.

For example, the AVMA has a partnership with the Native Humane Society in New Mexico. This program, [Reaching UP](#), provides high-quality, high-volume spay/neuters and preventive care services for pets in an underserved Native American population. These services are combined with community healthcare education. In addition, the American Veterinary Medical Foundation's Veterinary Care Charitable Fund provides veterinarians with a way to offer charitable services to clients facing personal hardships, as well as animals rescued from abuse and neglect.

We understand the difficulty, time and economic pressures, and technical challenges associated with filming a surgery. The AVMA believes that no matter what the time and cost, it is vital that programs under the Discovery Communications LLC banner maintain a commitment to science, truth, and reporting on appropriate methods of delivering healthcare, whether it is for people or animals.

Thank you,



Tom Meyer, DVM
President
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association



Janet Donlin, DVM, MBA
Executive Vice President and CEO
American Veterinary Medical

C: Rich Ross, Group President, Discovery Channel, Animal Planet and Science Channel
Rick Holzman, Executive Vice President and General Manager for Animal Planet at Discovery Communications