



Washington State Department of

**Health**

Health Systems Quality Assurance

Complaint Intake

P.O. Box 47857

Olympia WA 98504-7857

## Complaint Form

Today's Date: May 16, 2009

### 1. Your Information

Name: Sandi Ackerman, Director Best Little Rabbit, Rodent & Ferret HouseAddress: 14317 Lake City Way NECity: Seattle State: WA Zip: 98125Phone: Work ( 206 ) 365 - 9105 Home ( 425 ) 836 - 8925

### 2. Information about the Facility or Health Care Professional

Type of facility or profession: Veterinary ClinicName of facility or professional: Avian & Exotic Animal Hospital & Bridget Ferguson, DVMAddress: 10137 Main St., Suite 6City: Bothell State: WA Zip: 98011

### 3. Resident/Guest/Patient Information

Full Name (if different than above) Sugar (rabbit)Date of Birth (of patient, if complaint involves a patient) 1-2 years oldDate of incident: 8/26/2008

4. Please describe your complaint in the space below. Include the name, title and phone number of other patients, witnesses or staff members involved in the incident. Email completed form to the Customer Service Center at [HSQAComplaintIntake@doh.wa.gov](mailto:HSQAComplaintIntake@doh.wa.gov), or fax to 360.236.4818, or mail to:

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Please attach any supporting documentation and additional sheets if necessary.

Overview On August 26, 2008 Bridgett Ferguson, DVM & Avian & Exotic Animal Hospital stated they had performed a spay surgery on Sugar, a rabbit, that she had found the ovaries were gone and that she had therefore only removed the uterus.  
On May 8, 2009 Sugar underwent exploratory surgery where it was found that only one ovary had been removed leaving the second ovary and the entire uterus.

On August 26, 2008 I took Sugar to the Avian and Exotic Animal Hospital in Bothell. I provided the clinic with an intake document that they insist on for every patient. This included Sugar's photo. (Attachment A) We dropped off a total of 7 animals all scheduled for surgeries with Bridget for that same day. (Attachment B.)

When I picked Sugar up following surgery Bridgett told me that Sugar's ovaries had already been removed so she could only take the uterus. The clinic owner, Adolf Maas was there as well and the three of us had a lengthy conversation about veterinarians in the US starting to do oophorectomy's instead of an ovariohysterectomy. The following day I sent an e-mail to 10 of the top rabbit vets recommended by the House Rabbit Society around the country, and included Bridgett Ferguson in the e-mail. Bridgett did not contact me or any of the vets to dispute what I had written. (Attachment C)

Shortly after this surgery I stopped affiliation with this clinic due to numerous problems and deaths that were occurring.

Sugar was adopted the week following her surgery. Her tummy was still shaved showing the surgery line, which I pointed out to the adoptors so they could keep an eye on it. The family who adopted Sugar as a companion for their male rabbit began complaining that Sugar was acting as though she wasn't spayed. She was spraying, mounting, scattering her droppings. Typical signs of an unaltered rabbit.

I assumed that Sugar's ovaries had somehow showed up and become active. I took her in to one of our vets for blood work to have a test run by the University of Tennessee: Progesterone (HCG Stim). This test would show whether or not there were ovarian tissues/remnants left.

Just prior to this office visit our vet contacted Bridgett Ferguson's office and asked for Sugar's records to be sent. I was surprised to see the records faxed did not reflect anything that I had been told the day of Sugars "spay" surgery. The record sent to our current veterinarian indicated that the right ovary had cystic structures. And the report said Bridgett had taken a liver biopsy and had given the biopsy to me to send in to the lab. I had been given no biopsy & had no conversation or discharge instructions (see Attachment B) about a liver biopsy and (because there supposedly were no ovaries) there was never a discussion about an ovary being cystic. (Attachment D)

About two weeks later, the test came back positive for ovarian remnants ( Attachment E) and so we scheduled Sugar for an exploratory surgery on May 8, 2009.

May 8th our veterinarian called saying she was surprised by what she found during surgery. (Her notes are included. Attachment F) She told me that the right ovary appeared to have been surgically removed, but both the left ovary and the entire uterus were still intact and so she removed those organs.

Bridgett's notes & our bill indicate that she did an Ovariohysterectomy. She wrote that she had "Ligated vessels & stump..." (Attachment B & D)

At minimum Bridgett Ferguson and Avian and Exotic Animal Hospital should be admonished & penalized for this incompetence; for putting Sugar at risk due to the additional surgery she had to endure; and for practicing inferior/incompetent medicine. Further I believe Bridgett Ferguson and/or Avian & Exotic Animal Hospital should reimburse us for the surgery she didn't complete; for the cost of the Progesterone test; the cost of the exploratory surgery, and for our and Sugar's inconvenience caused by this incompetence. I also understand that if she & the clinic choose not to reimburse us for these expenses that I will file a civil suit against her and the clinic since the State Veterinary Board does not resolve financial issues.

For Department of Health use only			
Reviewed for multiple authority applications:	Date _____	Name _____	
Routed to: Multi-authority coordinator:	_____	date _____	
Office	_____	date _____	
Office	_____	date _____	
Office	_____	date _____	