Our Mission:
“Promoting excellence and professionalism of Alaska Veterinarians in advancing the health and well-being of animals and the public.”

SB 132 Has Significant Success But Not at the Finish Line Yet!

Thank you to all those who have joined our advocacy efforts for an exemption of veterinarians from the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program requirements in Alaska (SB 132 and HB 91). We have achieved success in our first milestone of the legislative process; however, we’re far from the finish line just yet!

SB 132 was heard February 3 in the Senate Health and Social Services (SHSS) Committee. Those providing testimony to the committee were Drs. Tracy Ward, Rachel Berngartt, Sarah Coburn, James Delker, Mary Ann Hollick, McKayla Dick, Ariana Anderson, and Jon Basler. Thanks to our solid advocacy from AKVMA members for SB 132, the committee voted unanimously on February 8 to progress the bill to the Senate Labor and Commerce committee. It is anticipated that SB 132 will be heard in the near future by this committee.

Of primary concern to the SHSS committee members was the unintended consequence of the PDMP legislation of the potential exposure of human health information. Senator Tom Begich went on record to state that a very compelling point made in our testimony was that veterinarians, who are not under HIPAA laws, can look at the pet owner’s medical data. “This utterly was not the intent of the 2017 PDMP legislation, it was never discussed, and it is an unintended consequence of this legislation; that’s why it makes sense to support this legislation.”

AKVMA calls on all members to stay vigilant and keep in contact with your legislators as we move forward. We’ve posted to our website the recordings of the legislative hearings as well as resources explaining, why it makes sense to exempt veterinarians from the PDMP. Go to https://akvma.org/supporthb91andSB132/. Please contact your legislators to support SB 132 and HB 91.
Dear Colleagues,

Hello, and I hope your 2022 is off to a great start! Your Board has been hard at work already this year...

Our primary focus since the October symposium has been preparing for the state legislative session and our advocacy for House Bill 91 and its companion Senate Bill 132 – Exemption of Veterinarians from Participating in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. The PDMP Committee held planning meetings, coordinated with Board of Veterinary Examiners (who also strongly support the bills), and sought advice from our Legislative Advisor. On January 16, we held a Zoom Town Hall Session for our membership and were pleasantly surprised by the number of attendees! If you were on the Zoom Town Hall, thank you very much and we hope you are advocating for this change. The PDMP committee is ready to assist you in any way we can. If you weren’t able to attend the Town Hall and would like more information on how you can help, please contact the AKVMA Executive Director or any Board member.

Led by our PDMP Committee Chair, Dr. McKayla Dick, we hit the ground running the first week of Session and met with over 30 Senators and Representatives in person, as well as had an additional half-dozen meetings with aides or by Zoom. We got great interest and questions, and have been following up providing research data, published papers, and other supporting documentation to staffers. On February 3, the Senate bill had its first reading in the Health and Social Services (SHSS) Committee. Dr. Rachel Berngartt from BOVE and myself were invited to provide testimony in support of this bill and myself were invited to provide testimony in support of this bill in person, and other veterinarians provided both invited and public testimony by phone and in person. On February 8, the SHHS Committee voted unanimously to progress SB 132 to the next committee (Senate Labor and Commerce).

Your Board has also been involved in other legislative issues, including reviewing a House Bill that should make it easier for qualified foreign veterinarians to practice in Alaska, and monitoring the State’s definition of the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship, as well as the FDA’s proposed changes to compounding regulations.

I would be remiss if I did not mention our newest Board members! Dr. Katrina Backus was chosen for the office of President-Elect, and Dr. Judy Montalbano was elected Treasurer. Dr. McKayla Dick has moved into the Past-President seat, and Dr. Sarah Coburn has agreed to serve as our Member-At-Large after Dr. Brian Davidson moved out of state. I would like to thank the new Board members for joining us, as well as thank Dr. Carol Hedges for her service as Treasurer over the past two years.

Lastly, all of you should have received a letter from me in late December regarding membership renewal. If you have already renewed your AKVMA membership, thank you! If you haven’t, I hope you will take the time to do so soon. We are stronger together and need every Alaska veterinarian voice to advocate and positively influence public policy and legislation.

All the best in the coming year, and please let any Board member know if there are ways we can help you and your practice!

Renew Your AKVMA Membership by March 31

https://akvma.org/join-or-renew-membership/
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In Memory of Dr. Val Stuve

Dr. Val Stuve passed on Friday, November 19, 2021 during the lunar eclipse of a full harvest moon. So think of Val when there’s a full moon, raise a glass of your favorite beverage, give a salute to Val and pet your critters.

He was born in 1946, raised in northeast Michigan, and spent his youth on the shores of Lake Huron. He attended Michigan State University and graduated as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation he followed his family to Alaska and in 1969 became Alaska’s 46th licensed veterinarian.

If you wish to honor Val please consider a memorial donation to the Dr. Val D. Stuve Scholarship for Veterinary Medicine at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Contributions may be made to this fund online at bit.ly/stuvescholarship. Checks can also be mailed to the UA Foundation, PO Box 755080, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99775. Please include a note/memo indicating the Dr. Stuve Endowed Scholarship for Veterinary Medicine.

His full obituary can be found at: https://legcy.co/3lD1UHA

SAVE THE DATES

AKVMA Symposium
October 7—9, 2022
Sheraton Anchorage Hotel
401 East 6th Ave
Anchorage Alaska

Please Support...

Alaska Rural Veterinary Outreach (ARVO) Winter Food Drive

Without help, many innocent dogs will suffer and die an ugly death from starvation and hypothermia this winter. Please help ARVO raise $7500 to provide dog food to some of Alaska’s coldest and poorest villages.

Donate Here

Congratulations to Dr. Irene Fisher—Our 2022 Rising Leader to the AVMA Leadership Conference

Dr. Irene Fisher of Chena Veterinary Clinic, Fairbanks was selected as AKVMA’s rising leader to the AVMA Leadership Conference this year! The Veterinary Leadership Conference (VLC) is the veterinary profession’s premier conference for leadership development. AKVMA in conjunction with AVMA sponsors one veterinarian to the VLC each year.

Dr. Fisher’s recap of the event: As for my experience at the VLC, I thought it was a really great experience! I had very little knowledge of how the AVMA worked on a regulatory level and this was a really good opportunity to see a little more of their inner workings and proceedings. I very much enjoyed all of the sessions I went to. It was a change of pace from the usual vet lectures I am used to, granted I did just come out of school. Conflict management and leadership topics seem to go overlooked but are still very important aspects of the profession, so it was nice to get exposure to that. Overall, it really opened my eyes to a lot of the behind the scenes work that goes into the AVMA and how local VMAs play into the bigger picture. I am very grateful to the AKVMA and AVMA for sponsoring me as an emerging leader!
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ZOETIS PETCARE
AVMA’s House of Delegates Winter meeting was in Chicago with an in-person meeting, as well as a virtual option which was added just before the meeting commenced. Agenda items included new policies, policy revisions and wellness in the veterinary profession.

The importance of rabies as a fatal disease for both animals and humans was reinforced with additional materials available with the help of the National Association of Public Health Veterinarians. Language was streamlined for the Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control 2016. As part of the rabies awareness effort, there was also a revised policy on rabies vaccination waivers. Waiving rabies vaccination puts the animals at risk if an exposure occurs, and euthanasia may be included in recommendations under public health regulations.

The AVMA approved a new policy on food safety. The policy incorporates language from an existing policy that urges FDA to prohibit importation into the US of animals or food products from animals that have been treated with drugs that are banned for use in the United States. These policies emphasize the critical role of veterinarians in maintaining a comprehensive food safety program.

AVMA supports the collection and consolidation of antimicrobial data to promote good stewardship. This follows the AVMA Core Principles of Stewardship. An article is planned to discuss this later in JAVMA (Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association).

These issues are evidence that the AVMA leads with broad influence and interest in all aspects of our veterinary profession, well beyond daily practice life, which greatly benefits animals, public health and veterinarians.

There are 2 candidates for AVMA President: Dr. Grace Bransford of California and Dr. Rena Carlson from Idaho. Both candidates are experienced, dedicated and well-spoken. We are fortunate to have such qualified individuals for such a demanding position.

As part of the HOD Winter Business meeting there is a Veterinary Information Forum (VIF). Professional burnout and promoting wellness in our profession were timely topics. Here in Alaska, we share the same challenges as our colleagues elsewhere with longer than average wait times, extended booking, and work-life imbalance. Also included were important topics such as license portability. Transferring your veterinary license, and gathering all of the required documentation can be an overwhelming task. The American Association of Veterinary State Boards is the only organization in the US or Canada which can offer license transport services through VAULT, the Veterinary Application for Uniform Licensure Transfer. Their website is https://www.aavsb.org/licensure-assistance/vault-transfers-overview.

Dr. Sarah Coburn (left) joins Dr. Mary Ann Hollick for the AVMA House of Delegates Meeting during the AVMA Leadership Conference Jan. 7—9, 2022.

How To Contact Your Delegates
AVMA Delegate
Dr. Mary Ann Hollick

AVMA Alternate Delegate
Dr. Amanda Taylor

T | 907.205.4272
E | info@akvma.org
MEET OUR TEAMS

Alaska Veterinary Clinic, was the first clinic in Anchorage back in 1958. Our 5 full time doctors work 3-4 days a week allowing them to maintain a comfortable work-life balance & experience all that Alaska has to offer.

Founded in 1984, Hillside Pet Clinic, is an AAHA certified practice seeing dogs, cats, and exotics in Anchorage. Our six-doctor practice is supported by a staff of over 30 enthusiastic team members, each with an important role to play in the hospital’s success.

Since 1996, Southside Animal Hospital and Wellness Center, has been caring for Anchorage clients with full-service medicine and surgery for dogs, cats, and ferrets. We have an interest in orthopedic surgery complimented by on-site canine rehabilitation.

Located in the beautiful Matanuska Susitna Valley of Alaska since 1978, Wasilla Veterinary Clinic, offers a wide array of services. Our clinic contains a full lab, pharmacy, radiology/ultrasound, and a surgical suite with a stunning view of the Chugach mountain range.

Soldotna Animal Hospital, est. 1999, is a fast-paced GP clinic. We offer after hours emergency as the closest ER clinic is 170 miles away. We celebrate together and support the community as a family. We are most proud of our high standard of care and healthy work environment.

Located on the remote “Emerald Isle,” Kodiak Veterinary Clinic, has been providing veterinary services for over 40 years. Since we are the only vet clinic on the island, we have the pleasure of caring for dogs, cats, exotics, and wildlife.

ALASKA HOSPITAL TEAMS

Being part of NVA Team Alaska, means being part of a family that cherishes and promotes the human-animal bond. We understand the importance of supporting our staff members and giving them opportunities for growth and development toward our ultimate goal of caring for our valued patients.

Our teams are respected members of their communities and often donate services to non-profit groups. We also enjoy long histories of promoting interest in the field of Veterinary Medicine: hosting student experiences from elementary age all the way through graduate school (externships and internships). We believe that mentoring and teaching students will help ensure that future generations of Animal Care Givers will share the same dedication to patient and client care that has become our hallmark.

OUR TEAMS REAP THE BENEFITS

- Modern and well-equipped facilities
- Continued Education and support of professional development at all levels
- Flexible schedules (work/life balance priority)
- Competitive Compensation (Benefits, CE, PTO, 401K)

ABOUT NVA

National Veterinary Association encourages our teams to “Join us, Stay you!” NVA believes in providing private practice veterinary hospitals the support to continue to practice medicine as they see fit for their specific client base. We mutually agree in the whole person model of professional development at all levels. NVA nurtures a community of like-minded veterinary professionals who are dedicated to serving clients and supporting teams with quality of life provisions.

Scan me to learn more or visit careers.nva.com
On February 8, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was confirmed in a commercial turkey flock in Dubois County, Indiana. This is the first confirmed case of HPAI in commercial poultry in the United States since 2020. This follows many detections in wild waterfowl in the United States in January and February on the Atlantic Flyway. HPAI has been detected in wild birds in North and South Carolina, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Florida, and New Hampshire. USDA announced on February 11 that surveillance for HPAI will be expanded in the Mississippi and Central Flyways.

Commercial and backyard poultry owners are encouraged to have robust biosecurity practices in place to prevent contact between domestic and wild birds.


Defend the Flock biosecurity resources: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/dtf-resources/dtf-resources

Tick Surveillance
The tick surveillance project will continue in 2022. Unique findings from last year included Ixodes gregsoni and Amblyomma sabanerae. Finding this tick on martens in Alaska represents a huge range extension from where it has previously been found. Another 1st for Alaska is Amblyomma sabanerae. It is a Central American tick that rarely occurs on turtles. The tick identified in Alaska was found on a pet store turtle in Alaska. We appreciate all of the veterinarians who submitted ticks in the past, or who have advised owners to submit ticks. Ticks can still be submitted to the State Vet Office through the mail, dropped off at OSV in person, or owners can drop ticks off at a local Department of Fish and Game Office. Submit a Tick page: https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/ticks/

For further information or questions please contact:

Dr. Laura Johnson (lgjson@mwt.net) or Partners for Wildlife (P4W@umn.edu).

LINK: https://sites.google.com/umn.edu/wildlifeinvetpractice/home
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**Membership is through each calendar year. Membership benefits include:**

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- Membership Perks (Job Postings, AKVMA Newsletter, Legislative Alerts)
- Veterinary Profession Updates
- Sponsorship of a Veterinary Leader to the AVMA Leadership Conference in January

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**Save the Dates!**

**2022 AKVMA SYMPOSIUM**  
October 7—9, 2022  
Downtown Sheraton  
Anchorage AK

**Annual AKVMA Membership Meeting**  
Downtown Sheraton  
October 8  
5:30pm