Dear Colleagues,

I hope that you all are faring well as our Alaska sun is coming back to visit 😊!

We, as the board of the AKVMA, have been working hard on several items. One of these includes discussion and clarification of the Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) with the Board of Veterinary Examiners as well as pushing forward with the new bills to exempt veterinarians from the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Please be on the lookout for updates about both areas of concern for Alaskan veterinarians. Also keep an eye out for information in regard to our annual AKVMA symposium planned for this October!

Kindest Regards,
Dr. Katrina Backus

Just In!

Hearings Scheduled for PDMP Bills
(Legislation to Exempt Veterinarians from PDMP Participation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SB 51 Hearing</th>
<th>HB 56 Hearing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate Health &amp; Social Services Committee</td>
<td>House Health &amp; Social Services Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 28, 2023</td>
<td>March 2, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30pm</td>
<td>3:00pm</td>
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Drs. Tracy Ward and Rachel Berngartt will be providing joint testimony to represent AKVMA and BOVE. Committee hearings can be viewed online at https://akleg.gov/; click on live now and the respective meeting.
PDMP Update By Dr. McKayla Dick

The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) was initially created as a response to the opioid crisis and has been operational in Alaska since 2012. Only pharmacists were initially required to report prescription data. As the opioid epidemic worsened the PDMP was amended in 2017 to include all Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) holders, including veterinarians. The law requires veterinarians to query and/or report to the PDMP in some circumstances when prescribing, administering, or directly dispensing certain controlled substances. As you all know the PDMP does not work for our patients and comes with a host of issues.

The AKVMA has been working to exempt veterinarians for several years! During the last legislative session we got very close with HB 91 and SB 132. SB 132 got all the way through the Senate with unanimous bipartisan support and we simply ran out of time in the House. However, don’t lose hope! This session the PDMP task force hit the ground running to speak with your Senators and Representatives and we are proud to announce that we have SB 51 and HB 56 (bills to exempt veterinarians from the PDMP) already scheduled to be heard.

SB 51 is sponsored by Senator Tobin with cosponsors Senator Gray-Jackson, Myers, Wilson, Dunbar, Kaufman, Bjorkman, Merrick, and Hughes. HB 56 is sponsored by Representative Ruffridge and cosponsored with Representative Hannan, Carrick, Sumner, Galvin, Mears, Gray, Schrage, Prax, McKay, Carpenter, Mina, and Allard. We continue to have broad bipartisan support and are hopeful this is our year! If one of the sponsoring legislators is your legislator, please email a thank you.

Please continue to support your associate veterinarians in becoming exempt from the PDMP by calling and writing your Senators and Representatives; vote YES on SB 51 and HB 56.
Thank you to Lakefield Veterinary Group
DIAMOND sponsor of the AKVMA Symposium

See What's Possible
Are you interested in joining one of our Alaska teams?
Explore Our Careers: bit.ly/LFakvma23

Join Our Team

Your Dream, Your Vision, Your Legacy.
We want to invest in our Doctors and team, just as you invest in your work, education and patients. Maintaining the highest medical and ethical standards in veterinary medicine is important to us, and is a prerequisite for joining our team. We are looking for potential candidates with excellent communication skills, the ability to interact well with other Doctors, team members, and clients, has a sense of humor, and most importantly, has a passion for veterinary medicine.
Congratulations
Dr. Vanessa Serratore
“Rising Leader” to the AVMA LC

Every year AKVMA in conjunction with AVMA sponsors a Rising Leader to attend the AVMA Leadership Conference in January. Congratulations to this year’s recipient, Dr. Vanessa Serratore! Dr. Serratore shares some highlights from the leadership conference.

By Dr. Vanessa Serratore

AKVMA and AVMA’s willingness to sponsor one veterinarian each year to attend the AVMA Leadership Conference (VLC) is a huge asset for both emerging and current leaders within our state. I attended with very little knowledge about organized veterinary medicine and left with a new respect for both our state and national governance. Although it often feels as if we are alone within our profession, barely making it through the daily grind of impatient clients, tremendous caseloads, and staffing issues, there is an entire network of individuals from across the country engaging in the improvement and future of veterinary medicine.

The VLC is a great way to experience firsthand the backbone of our profession and how its leadership is structured. Additionally, you are provided the opportunity to network and develop friendships, brainstorm solutions to current challenges, participate in a mentorship program, and attend a variety of high-class leadership talks that pertain both to clinic life and real life. The VLC really is the most impactful conference I have attended thus far in my career.

I encourage everybody to intentionally set apart the time to attend the next one and learn about all the opportunities available to you through the AKVMA and AVMA. There are good people out there advocating for our profession as leaders both on the clinic floor and on the board. Make the decision to engage and be one of them!

Be Our Next Rising Leader
AVMA Leadership Conference

AKVMA is inviting members that are in their 0-15 post-graduation years to apply for paid registration, air fare, and lodging to the 2024 AVMA Leadership Conference. Next year’s conference will be January 4-6, 2024 in Chicago. One AKVMA member will be selected for this exceptional opportunity! You’ll join AKVMA’s president-elect and our AVMA delegates in attending this event!

Apply by September 15, 2023—Submit a short summary describing why you became a veterinarian, where you see yourself in the next 10 years and how you think attending the conference will be of benefit to you and your practice.

Submit summary to: execdir@akvma.org

The veterinarian selected will be notified in October and asked to write a summary of their experience for the AKVMA News after attending the event next January.

Save the Dates!

AKVMA Symposium
October 6—8, 2023

Hotel Captain Cook
939 W 5th Avenue
Anchorage Alaska
**Quick Tip**

**Should associates receive a piece of the pie when the hospital is sold?**

**Risk vs Reward**

Being a business owner versus being an employee comes with different risks and rewards. Employees have zero risk when it comes to the outcome of overall operations of the hospital. Therefore, they do not earn a reward when the hospital is sold. For these same reasons, they are not entitled to a discount if they purchase the hospital that has kept them gainfully employed.

One critical role of any employee, in any business, is to add value to their employer. Their reward for this is called a paycheck. Associate doctors are hired to serve clients and patients and add to the revenues and profits of the hospital. For this type of work, they earn compensation.

Owners, on the other hand, carry all the weight of being the business owner. The good and the bad. The celebrations and sleepless nights.

**Owner responsibilities:**

- Generate enough cash flow to keep their employees and vendors paid
- Handle employee and client conflicts
- Oversee the marketing efforts to ensure the practice is serving enough patients, to generate the revenues, that pay the bills
- Resolve maintenance issues on the equipment and building
- Hiring, firing, and scheduling employees
- Setting medical protocols
- Putting systems in place that improve efficiencies

The list goes on, this is just a few examples of the owner responsibilities. The owner may delegate some of these, but ultimately, they are responsible. The buck stops with them!

When it comes time to sell the practice, the owner gets to reap the reward of all this added responsibility they chose to take on. The better they have managed their business, the more return on investment they will reap.

On the flip side, if a business fails, the owner holds the responsibility of employees losing jobs. The owner must also find a way to get out of debt. In some cases, this results in bankruptcy. Associate doctors don’t take any part of this risk, nor should they. For the very same reason, they should not partake in the gains of the hospital sale. Again, risk versus reward.

If associates want to enjoy the benefits of selling a successful hospital, then it’s time for ownership! Owning a practice IS possible and we can help with the next steps, give us a call!

**Visit our website for additional details on our listings**

Nikki Nitz, CPA, CMA
Simmons Northwest  *  208–664–3100
Simmons@SimmonsNorthwest.com
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discover your trust
Tailored solutions for your practice, your animal specialty, and your career

Veterinary student
Student Basic Protection, Complimentary Life & Professional Liability

Associate veterinarian
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Thinking about what’s next
Retirement, Hospital Indemnity, Long-Term Care

For your life outside of the practice
Life, Home, Auto, Dental, Vision, Critical Illness

Practice owner
Workers’ Compensation, Employment Practices Liability, Property and General Liability, Professional Overhead Expense

Scan QR Code to Discover Your Solutions
AVMA HOUSE OF DELEGATE UPDATE
2023 AVMA Leadership Conference

The AVMA House of Delegates met on January 5-7 for the regular winter session in Chicago, IL. Several updates were provided to the House regarding veterinary economics and workplace workforce issues. Several policies were up for their 5-year review, and many were crucial to the practice of veterinary medicine and therefore brought forward to the house for discussion.

During the economic update, information was provided regarding the suspected upcoming recession. The recession is predicted to be uneven, and without a general downturn. All types of pet ownership are being affected by the impending recession. The number of household pets increased during Covid spring 2020 and 2021, but by spring 2022 there was a decrease in number of households owning pets and that number is trending down.

Inflation was a current common topic of discussion on the economic update. Historical salary trends have been positive, especially in the last 5 years. This has been largely impacted however by the ongoing increases in the costs of goods and services we are seeing with the current inflation.

Retention and attrition continue to be a priority for the veterinary profession. We have seen a slight decline in the number of veterinarians considering leaving the profession. AVMA has created many workforce initiatives to help target where our challenges are and how we can tackle them. Some of these initiatives include:

- **Surveys:** Help AVMA to dig down at the state level with research-backed insights by responding to surveys that are distributed. Please take time to fill out surveys! One survey to keep an eye out for is Census of Veterinarians (was sent out at the end of January).

- **Economic State of the Profession:** Download and review the economic state of the veterinary profession. This latest report provides a detailed visual summary of the economic state of the veterinary profession and examines the major trends through the lens of veterinary education, veterinary employment, and veterinary services. Understanding current economic trends enables the veterinary community to be agile, innovative, and ready for the best possible future.

- **The Practice Pulse:** This tool is a real-time monthly digest of key practice data, trends, and expert insight to bolster your business strategy and help your veterinary practice stay competitive. Practice Pulse leverages benchmarked data from thousands of veterinary practices, through a partnership between AVMA and VetSuccess.

DEI JOURNEY FOR TEAMS

Provides a learning pathway for vet professionals to deepen knowledge of diversity and improve diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in work spaces. The program can be accessed at journeyforteams.org. There is a 15-minute welcome webinar, and once completed you can advance to educational models. A cornerstone guide is the navigator handbook which helps to lead staff meeting and facilitate discussions.

MARKETING UPDATE

The AVMA marketing team is committed to supporting the veterinary community. They have created a reputation management toolkit with an educational grant from Banfield. The toolkit is online and provides new tools to address situations. A new benefit is that this is now available to all vet team members not just AVMA members. Find more information at avma.org/reputationmanagement.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES FORMAL BUSINESS

Nine resolutions were brought before the house

**Resolution 1**—Supersede Policy on Responsible Breeding of Companion Animals. This resolution passed as written.

**Resolution 2**—Supersede Policy on Therapeutic Medications in Non-racing Performance Horses. This resolution passed as written.

**Resolution 3**—New Policy on Unregulated Horse Racing. This resolution passed as written.

**Resolution 4**—Supersede Policy on Castration and Dehorning of Cattle. This resolution passed as written.
HOD updates from page 7

Resolution 5—Consolidated policy on Harmonized Approach to Voluntary and Regulated Aquatic Animal Health Programs. This resolution was amended and passed as amended.

Resolution 6—Consolidated Policy on Veterinary Compounding. This resolution was amended and passed as amended.

Resolution 7—Revised Policy on The Importance of Veterinarians in Food Safety. This resolution was amended and passed as amended.

Resolution 8—Revised Policy on The Veterinarian’s Role in Supporting Appropriate Selection and Use of Service, Assistance, Emotional Support, and Therapy Animals. This resolution did not pass and was referred back to the BOD for more consideration by the animal welfare committee.

Resolution 9—Revised Policy on Dog Bite Prevention. This resolution was amended and passed as amended.

VETERINARY INFORMATION FORUM

The Veterinary Healthcare Team – Is There a Need for a Mid-level Position? The overwhelming responses to this question were that we should be focusing on supporting and retaining talented veterinary technicians in the profession and not creating a new position of a Mid-level practitioner such as a veterinary PA.

The discussion around ways in which we can support our veterinary technicians included:

- Title protection
- Standardization of nomenclature for technicians
- Retention within veterinary technology field
- Financial security
- Support for the acquisition of veterinary technician specialists; and
- Consider incorporating the recommendations from the task force on veterinary technician utilization

The Impact of Workplace Culture on Wellbeing and Retention:
There was lots of great discussion on this topic. Some of the talking points during the convention included:

- Workplace wellbeing requires attention to both individual and systemic factors
- Support individual efforts by making it possible for employees to take regular breaks and time away from work
- Promote structure and organization
- Model healthy and effective communication at all levels of leadership, including dealing civilly and constructively with conflict
- Acknowledge the good work of those on our teams

- Build psychological safety on teams
- Lead by example
  ⇒ Establish baseline measurements and reassess at regular intervals
  ⇒ Take a proactive approach using evidence-based tools
  ⇒ Make self-care feasible through addressing policies and procedures
  ⇒ Create a dedicated wellbeing strategy that supports a sense of belonging, facilitates candid and open communication, and promotes trust among all team members

How To Contact Your Delegates

AVMA Delegate
Dr. Amanda Taylor
Email: amandataylordvmhod@gmail.com

AVMA Alternate Delegate
Dr. Sarah Coburn
Email: tundravet@gmail.com

Congratulations to Dr. Mary Ann Hollick

Dr. Mary Ann Hollick was presented the AKVMA Meritorious Service Award during the AKVMA Symposium held at the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel on October 8, 2022. She was recognized for her many years of outstanding service on behalf of Alaskan veterinarians. Dr. Amanda Taylor presented the award and stated, “Dr. Hollick has been a true pillar of AKVMA, and her efforts, tenacity, and dedication are of unprecedented caliber.”

Dr. Hollick has served on the AKVMA Board of Directors since 2006 and has represented Alaskan veterinarians on a national level with her role as an AVMA Delegate. She has worked tirelessly to advocate for legislative and regulatory issues that benefit the Alaska veterinary community.

A graduate of University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine in 1989, Dr. Hollick has been engaged in the veterinary profession for over 30 years.
Thank you to Zoetis Petcare
DIAMOND sponsor of the AKVMA Symposium

HAVE YOU SEEN THEM IN YOUR WAITING ROOM?

Flexible dosing helps you customize relief for each dog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-timer with acute flare of allergic dermatitis</th>
<th>Seasonal allergy flare</th>
<th>Hot spot</th>
<th>Flea allergy dermatitis</th>
<th>Food allergy acute flare-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apoquel BID for 7-14 days then re-evaluate</td>
<td>Apoquel BID for 10-14 days then SID for remainder of season</td>
<td>Apoquel BID for 5-7 days for allergic itch + antibiotics, topicals for skin infection.</td>
<td>Apoquel BID for 14 days then SID if necessary + flea control</td>
<td>Apoquel BID for 7 days with return to hypoallergenic diet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use clinical judgement. Recommended dosing is BID for up to 14 days, then SID as needed.
THINK APOQUEL FIRST
FOR DOGS WITH ACUTE
ALLERGIC ITCH

Apoquel helps your clients build trust and confidence in your practice

• **Fast and effective** — relief beginning in 4 hours\(^1\) and allergic itch control within 24 hours\(^2\)
• **Flexible dosing** — use for short-term treatment of allergic dermatitis flares, long-term maintenance therapy and start-and-stop itch control during diagnostic trials

Apoquel helps restore quality of life to dogs and their families\(^3\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94% said Apoquel</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPROVED THEIR</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUALITY OF LIFE(^4)</td>
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<td>96% believed Apoquel</td>
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<td>IMPROVED THEIR</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOG’S QUALITY OF LIFE(^4)</td>
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REDUCED TREATMENT COMPLEXITY

83% FEWER CONCOMITANT DERMATOLOGIC THERAPIES were provided after 60 days on Apoquel,\(^3\) which can reduce burden of care\(^5\)

INDICATIONS: Control of pruritus associated with allergic dermatitis and control of atopic dermatitis in dogs at least 12 months of age.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: Do not use Apoquel in dogs less than 12 months of age or those with serious infections. Apoquel may increase the chances of developing serious infections, and may cause existing parasitic skin infestations or pre-existing cancers to get worse. Consider the risks and benefits of treatment in dogs with a history of recurrence of these conditions. New neoplastic conditions (benign and malignant) were observed in clinical studies and post-approval. Apoquel has not been tested in dogs receiving some medications including some commonly used to treat skin conditions such as corticosteroids and cyclosporines. Do not use in breeding, pregnant, or lactating dogs. Most common side effects are vomiting and diarrhea. Apoquel has been used safely with many common medications including parasiticides, antibiotics and vaccines. See full Prescribing Information at ApoquelPI.com.


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Updates from the Office of the State Veterinarian

By Dr. Sarah Coburn
Assistant State Veterinarian

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 (HPAI) Update

It has been just over a year since the 1st detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 was found in a wild bird in the United States.

In the United States:
- 47 states have confirmed HPAI in domestic poultry
- 760 different flocks affected
- 58 million birds affected
- HPAI detected in over 100 different wild bird species
- HPAI detected in 17 mammal species

In Alaska:
- Six poultry flocks in Alaska were confirmed to have HPAI in 2022.
- All 6 flocks observed significant morbidity and mortality in their flocks in a period of 2 or 3 days up to a week.
- The most common sign was mortality of multiple otherwise healthy birds
- HPAI detected in 3 mammal species (1 American black bear, 1 Kodiak bear, and 2 red foxes)
- HPAI detected in 27 different wild bird species

Surveillance thru the winter shows H5N1 is still circulating in wild waterfowl populations in Alaska. The primary risk factor for domestic poultry is contact with wild waterfowl such as mallards, pintails, or teals. The most important measure owners can take is to prevent contact between their poultry and wild birds. This may include covering the run, limited free-ranging, and not allowing wild birds access to poultry feed.

Please encourage owners to report illness or deaths in their flocks, so that the disease can most effectively be controlled and spread limited.

For sick or dead domestic birds: call Office of the State Veterinarian at 907-375-8213.

Wild birds: call the Sick and Dead Bird Hotline (USFWS) at: 1-866-527-3358.

Information on HPAI and confirmed positives in our state can be found at: https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/announcements/avian-influenza-outbreaks/

Ticks

We are still collecting ticks for surveillance and to identify any new species making their way to Alaska. If you find a tick on a pet, or if an owner brings one to you, please submit it to our office. It can be collected in any type of vial or blood tube without additives. See https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/ticks/submit-a-tick/ for submission form and address.

New Mental Health Resources Available

The Veterinary Hope Foundation is a non-profit committed to helping veterinarians and veterinary teams who are struggling with their mental health. The foundation employs nine licensed mental health professionals who lead veterinary support groups at no charge.

There are support groups for new moms, shelter veterinarians, livestock veterinarians, practice owners, practice managers, and veterinary technicians. New groups are forming to meet the needs of those who reach out. Those interested in joining a support group can do so at www.veterinaryhope.org.

“We’ve found that group members quickly form deep, authentic bonds because they’re at a similar life stage or in a similar role. They’re able to be vulnerable, which is healing in itself when you’re wired to always be the caregiver instead of the care receiver”, said Dr. Blair McConnel, President of the Board of Veterinary Hope Foundation.
AKVMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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District XI AVMA Representative
Sandy Willis, DVM, MVSc, DACVIM

AKVMA NEWS is a publication of the Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association for its members. Comments should be sent to Pat Anderson, AKVMA Executive Director; execdir@akvma.org.