



4th Annual Veterinary Student Legislative Fly In in Washington, D.C.

February 13th –14th, 2012

Eligibility:

Veterinary students from each of the thirty SAVMA student chapters and the two associate schools with active membership in Student AVMA are eligible. Students may be in any year in the veterinary curriculum and have any level of experience with governmental relations. Each school may choose two representative students and one alternate student in a way they deem appropriate, and must provide this information to Penny Coder (pscrzf@mail.missouri.edu) via the registration form by December 1, 2011. Based on the ultimate number of spots available, alternates will be chosen to attend the Fly-In via lottery. **Registration for the event is a commitment, so please make every effort to uphold that commitment.**

Program Description:

The purpose of this workshop is to initiate veterinary student participation in the legislative process and to educate students and Members of Congress on the public policy issues facing the veterinary profession.

Prior to the program date, students will arrange meetings with their legislators with the help of the AVMA Governmental Relations Division. Students will then spend two days in Washington, D.C., during which they will learn about the legislative process and the issues currently facing the veterinary profession, spend time on Capitol Hill visiting their legislators and discussing the issues, and explore Washington, D.C.

Program Dates:

The educational program will begin the morning of February 13th and continue through February 14th, with visits to Capitol Hill. Travel home can be planned for the evening of Tuesday February 14th, no earlier than 4 pm EST.

Hotel/Program Location:

The educational program will take place at:

L'Enfant Hotel
480 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC, 20024

Check-in will be on Sunday, February 12 and check-out will be on Tuesday, February 14. Rooms have been blocked for students attending the conference at a group rate of \$209 per night (not including taxes, incidentals or parking). Please contact the Hotel's reservations line toll free at 1-800-635-5065 or reserve online on the Hotel's website: [AVMA Student Legislative Fly-in](#) using group code **AVM112**. A credit card number or one night's advance deposit will be required to secure a room out of this block.

Washington DC is served by three airports: Ronald Reagan National Airport, Washington Dulles, and Baltimore Washington. However, the closest, most convenient airport is Ronald Reagan National Airport. The hotel is a quick taxi or Metro ride from this airport.

Need money to cover hotel and travel expenses?

Stipends will be available to each attendee, thanks to our 2012 partner, Elanco.

In addition, SAVMA has been able to allocate close to \$80 per attendee to offset a portion of the cost of travel. We encourage you to seek additional funding from other sources, such as your state's Veterinary Medical Association. We have provided a form letter to help you explain the program and the benefits to your state VMA.

Make the changes with your information, add a little about yourself and send it off. Even better- call up the president and explain it yourself! Other avenues of sponsorship could include: your SCAVMA, allied industry, pharmaceutical companies, and local veterinary alumni associations!

Questions? PLEASE CONTACT:

Penny Coder
Email: pscrzf@mail.missouri.edu
Phone: 314-550-6010

Katie Zatroch
Email: zatroch.2@osu.edu
Phone: 216-409-6104

Special Thanks to our sponsors:



Funding Request Sample Letter

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

This is meant as a backbone of information to send to your State Veterinary Medical Associations. Please take time to personalize this letter for you and your state. You can also use the information in the letter in a phone call to your state VMA president.

Dear ***Enter your state*** Veterinary Medical Association:

My name is ***enter name and a little about yourself***. I am attending the Fourth Annual Veterinary Student Legislative Day in Washington D.C. This workshop aims to encourage veterinary students' participation in the legislative process and educate students and members of congress on the public policy issues facing the veterinary profession. This program is hosted by the Student AVMA and the AVMA Governmental Relations Division. The Student American Veterinary Medical Association has several objectives for this program:

- To expose veterinary students to the legislative process by participation in an Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill
- To educate students on current public policy issues facing the profession of veterinary medicine
- To lobby Members of Congress on legislative issues important to the veterinary profession.
- To develop school advocates to serve as contacts to the GRD and AAVMC, and other interested organizations for future legislative endeavors.
- To help veterinary students learn the importance of working with their legislators both now while students and after graduation as veterinarians.

I hope this trip will broaden my perspective of organized veterinary medicine and provide me with tools to be involved, stay involved and involve others now and in the future, both nationally and within our state.

The program is open to three students from each of the thirty schools and two associate schools with active membership in the Student AVMA to visit D.C. February 13th to February 14th, 2012. I am contacting you in hopes to acquire sponsorship or funding to allow my participation in this educational endeavor. Any level of contribution will be a great help. My expected costs include \$209 per night for the hotel and my travel expenses of about **** \$ _____ ****.

Please contact me ****PROVIDE CONTACT INFO***** with any questions you may have. I am very excited about this opportunity and hope that it will allow me to have a positive impact on the future of our profession. Thank you for taking the time to consider supporting me in attending this new event.

Sincerely,

From The Vet Gazette

Veterinary Students Get Involved in the Legislative Process

Tuesday, April 19, 2011

By: Katie Zatroch,

The Ohio State University, Class of 2013

53 students representing 21 different veterinary schools met at the Doubletree Hotel in Washington, D.C. February 7-8, 2011 for the 3rd annual Student Legislative Fly In. Sponsorship provided by Merial, the AVMA, and SAVMA allowed veterinary students from across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean to attend. Organized by the AVMA's Governmental Relations Division (GRD) and SAVMA's Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC), the program focuses on presenting current legislative issues affecting the veterinary profession, demonstrating the impact that veterinarians can have in the realm of advocacy, and preparing veterinary students for participation in the legislative process.

On the first day of the program, after an introduction to the program and the city of Washington, D.C. by Dr. Mark Lutschaunig, Director of the GRD, students participated in a panel discussion with current (Dr. Whitney Miller) and former (Drs. Stic Harris and Doug Meckes) participants in the AVMA Congressional Science Fellowship Program. This program allows veterinarians to serve as scientific advisors to Members of Congress for one year. Each participant communicated the personal and professional growth afforded by the challenging and fast-paced lifestyle that comes with the program.

Participants listened to Dr. Ellen Carlin, a staffer for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, and Dr. Melinda Cep, Legislative Assistant for the Office of Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT-3), share their experiences in the legislative process in Washington, D.C. From them, students were able to gain a better sense of what life is like as a professional staffer. The program then delved into the impact that can be made by the efforts of grassroots politics, as presented by Kay Johnson Smith, Executive Vice President of the Animal Agriculture Alliance. Her presentation focused on emerging animal welfare issues and the veterinarian's role in educating the public. Stephanie Fisher, Grassroots Coordinator for the AVMA, followed with a presentation about staying involved and continuing to make a difference in the political arena as a practicing veterinarian. She stressed utilization of the AVMA Congressional Advocacy Network (AVMA-CAN), a social media outreach project of the GRD. After a luncheon during which Dr. Suzanne Causey, Technical Service Veterinarian of Merial, spoke to the students, Adrian Hochstadt, Assistant Director of the AVMA State Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, gave a presentation on current issues in veterinary medicine and their influence on state politics. He focused upon how the AVMA assists state VMAs and the importance of veterinarians in public policy.

After this series of presentations invigorated the students about the possibilities that lie ahead, it was time to direct that excitement toward the immediate opportunity to make an impact—the next day's Capitol Hill visits. Attendees spent the afternoon getting prepped by the members of the GRD. Students were given an overview of how the GRD offices work, and information as to how to navigate Capitol Hill. Gina Luke, Assistant Director of the GRD, presented two advocacy issues that were the focus of the Fly In's Capitol Hill visits. Students learned the details of the Veterinary Services Investment Act and the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

Enhancement Act, and were given fact sheets to supplement their visits with legislative offices. Participants used these materials to practice delivering information in mock visits.

After having time to process the information presented throughout Monday's activities, students and GRD staff gathered on Tuesday morning and departed for Capitol Hill. Once there, Fly In attendees listened to a Q&A session with congressional staffers in the Committee on Agriculture Hearing Room. After a glimpse into the inner workings of Capitol Hill and the importance of informed and enthusiastic young people taking part in the legislative process, the group prepared themselves for an afternoon of advocacy.

Students met with staffers in their state legislators' offices and asking for original co-sponsorship of the Veterinary Services Investment Act. This act, which would establish a matching grant program for developing, implementing and sustaining veterinary services throughout the United States. Students also asked for co-sponsorship of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act., This act, which would make the current VMRLP, a grant program designed to relieve veterinary shortages in underserved areas, exempt from gross income and employment taxes. Following the day of meetings, attendees gathered at the GRD office for lunch and a discussion of Capitol Hill visits with Dr. Lutschaunig and other members of the GRD staff.

After a two-day whirlwind of learning and mounting excitement for the coming visits, the students were able to settle in to the concept of presenting ideas that promote the veterinary profession within the framework of their personal experiences as students saddled with debt, anxious about the job search, and eager to maintain the vitality of the veterinary profession. Time will tell how attendees' effort will be rewarded in this Congressional session, but those who were able to participate already consider the Student Legislative Day a success. With a new sense of appreciation for the legislative process and the eagerness to be at the table where decisions are made, students are now equipped with the tools to have a lifelong influence in the political realm!

Want to know what is going on in D.C. in real time?

“Like” the [SAVMA GAC Facebook](#) page

“Like” the [AVMA-CAN Facebook](#) page or checkout the [the AVMA-CAN website!](#)

Veterinary Student Legislative Day

MEASURING SUCCESS

The Veterinary Student Legislative Day is an example of what a big idea, encouragement, and enthusiastic students and supporters can achieve.

- Gained co-sponsorship to many of the bills that the AVMA supported
- Played a critical role in convincing Congress to provide funding for National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA), a loan repayment program for veterinarians whom practice in underserved areas. \$2.95 MILLION was appropriated for NVMSA in the 2009 Omnibus Bill. This is over twice the funding received in previous years.
- Educated students about current important veterinary-related Legislation and issues.
- Taught students the influence and power they have to effectively advocate and the avenues by which they can have a political voice.
- Encouraged and empowered students to become future political ambassadors and advocates for the veterinary profession.

See what the students had to say:

“...I really felt it gave me a great intro to the politics of our profession. I now know how to get involved, and how to help others get involved! I would love to come again!”

“Thank you. This was an amazing experience for me and has encouraged me to seek out more opportunities to get informed and get involved in our democratic process.”

“...this presence of veterinary students on the Hill is hugely beneficial to our representation of our profession and of our students.”

“I think it really had a big impact on not only the support of funding for NVMSA but also a large eye opener for the veterinary students involved. Again a HUGE thanks!”

“...because I had a positive experience, I will be more inclined to continue being active in the future.”

“A program like this is absolutely necessary in order to get the word out and prepare some vets for in order to better shape the future of our profession.”

“I had a wonderful experience and met with great people who were very receptive to what I had to say.”

“After the legislative day I invited our legislators to a college event and was able to effectively grab the attention of our Senator and present NVMSA when she made a campus visit. Both of the encounters would not have been possible without the Legislative Day training.”

“It has been my goal since the Veterinary Student Legislative Day to spread the word about the importance of our involvement in the future of legislative issues.”

“The Student Legislative Day helps prepare students to become advocates for both their profession and the animals they serve.”