“Protecting you through it all.” Since 1962, the PLIT has been serving AVMA members and our profession. Today more than ever, the group buying power of a strong membership base will continue to result in long-term stability, comprehensive coverage and competitive pricing.

2016 was an exciting year with the launch of three educational resources: the Action Center, the “Cover Your Assets Module”, and the revised edition of our Veterinary Safety Manual. Business insurance activity increased, and the strategic initiative to increase our visits to practice owners and managers has strengthened the PLIT brand. And, this was the first full year for the PLIT to sponsor the student liability coverage premium with the insurance carrier for SAVMA members. These are a few examples of our complete focus on member service and value.

2016 Executive Overview

The AVMA PLIT program is robust and financially stable. The PLIT has an excellent business partner relationship with its broker, HUB International Midwest Limited, as well as with its key insurance carriers: Zurich, The Hartford, Travelers, and CNA. We completed our fifty-fourth year of dedicated member service to AVMA members on December 31, 2016. Here are key highlights for the year:

- Corporate strategy developed to make the PLIT the first choice among decision makers—including corporate entities—seeking to help support them through every stage of their growth plan.

- Advocates worked continuously to make sure that insured AVMA members can be confident that they have access to all the protection they need. The team included the PLIT Trustees, PLIT staff and our key strategic insurance partners and advisors.

- Our team of Trust Veterinarians reviewed more than 3,100 professional liability claims reported by certificate holders. They also spoke with numerous insureds facing license complaints and allegations of malpractice, providing guidance during a very stressful time. Additionally, 760 veterinary license defense claims were handled by the program.

- To help veterinary students prepare for and protect their futures, significant financial assistance was provided in sponsorships for ALL for Students (Achieving, Leading and Learning) program, the Veterinary Business Management Association (VBMA), and the Veterinary Leadership Experience (VLE).
2016 Successes

Professional Liability

The PLIT program continues to be the top choice of veterinarians. The PLIT program closed 2016 with 63,985 certificates, with just under 80% of active AVMA members purchasing professional liability insurance. Participation in the veterinary license defense endorsement was at 75.21%, and 5.67% of those certificates carried the new, higher $100,000 limit.

The PLIT has also always worked hard to keep professional liability premium rates low for AVMA members. However, claim costs for legal defense fees and settlement expenses continued to rise, and a modest rate increase of just 7% was necessary for the 2017 policy renewal. We work closely with our strategic partners to minimize the rate increases as much as possible, and we’re pleased to announce that there will be no rate increase for the 2018 professional liability renewal.

Business Insurance

The business insurance policy count at the end of 2016 was at 16,420; an increase of 5.05% from the prior year. And, 48.5% of our business insurance clients purchased more than one business policy; a 10% increase from a few years prior.

The business insurance service unit managed these 16,000+ individual business policies. This included account servicing needs and incoming calls for renewal consultations, updating policy information, clarifying questions about coverage, and issuing certificates of insurance and auto identification cards.

Practice Visits

The relationship that the PLIT has with its clients is grounded in trust, expertise, and confidence. Practice visits allow us to further enhance this relationship in a personal way and build even stronger relationships with our insureds. Overwhelmingly, we only receive positive feedback after a personal practice visit. Increasing our practice visits was a 2016 strategic initiative, and will continue in years to come.

Melissa Wallace-Clay, Human Resources Generalist at Compassion-First Pet Hospitals, shared this feedback after a practice visit from Susan Miller (HUB) and Dr. Linda Ellis (PLIT):

“Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to meet with us yesterday. We all have a better understanding of AVMA PLIT and all the resources available. Each of you made it easy to ask questions that may have been deemed obvious. I hope you enjoyed your short visit to New Jersey and I look forward to working together.”

Large Practices, Corporate Groups, and Roll ups

To illustrate the breadth, depth, and expertise of our team for growing veterinary businesses, the PLIT developed new materials for this segment. At the corporate level, the practice level, and the team level, you can count on the PLIT program for best-in-class coverage and risk management.

Action Center

The PLIT online Action Center launched and is a great new way for veterinarians to learn about the professional liability and license defense claims process and access information 24/7. Available at avmaplit.com/actioncenter, the Action Center includes instructional videos and step-by-step explanations to help veterinarians navigate potential or actual professional liability malpractice claims or license complaints. This new resource helps veterinarians take control by taking action.
Veterinary Safety Manual

The newly enhanced manual (avmaplit.com/safetymanual) contains a full safety policy program for veterinary practices. The manual provides a robust safety guidebook and is a tool for members to start, update, or modify a personalized safety program at their practice. Each chapter was thoroughly reviewed, updated, and refined for 2016 standards. Reviewers included three PLIT Trust Veterinarians, seven HUB Risk Consultants, four University Veterinarians, and four practicing Veterinarians.

VMG Webinars for Equine Practitioners

VMG, AVMA PLIT and AVMA LIFE collaborated on a successful webinar series, which launched in December. Recordings are available at avmaplit.com/vsgwebinars.

“Cover Your Assets” Educational Module

Developed for veterinary students and available at avmaplit.com/cya, this module launched in the fall of 2016. Students will learn tips to avoid malpractice claims and veterinary license complaints, review an actual claim example and its outcome, and learn how the PLIT program can help protect them throughout their career. PLIT Trust Veterinarian Dr. Nina Mouledous appears in the video along with defense attorney Anthony DeVito, JD, to provide their expertise. Students can watch the four brief videos at their own pace and resume playback later. Following the video, students are prompted to take a quiz and will be provided with a certificate of completion. Students can include their certificate of completion in their Veterinary Business Management Association (VBMA) Honors Portfolio starting in the spring semester of 2017.

Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) Risk Awareness Alert

This alert, available at avmaplit.com/vfd, is part of our ongoing effort to bring awareness to potential liability risks that can arise in the day-to-day work of veterinarians. The VFD alert includes information on:

- Understanding VFD regulations and liability risks
- Tips to avoid liability risks related to the VFD
- VFD resources
PLIT Trustees and PLIT Staff

The PLIT Trustees oversee the PLIT program to ensure that members are well served and that coverages evolve with the changing needs of the profession. The Trustees actively drive PLIT’s planning and policy development efforts and oversee the execution. The board consists of seven trustees. Additionally, there is one liaison-trustee from the AVMA membership office. In 2016, the board and liaison-trustee included:

- Dr. Kent McClure, JD (Chair)
- Dr. Rosemary LoGiudice (Secretary–Treasurer)
- Dr. Jim Benefield
- Dr. Noreen Lanza, JD
- Dr. John Ehrhardt (Vice Chair)
- Dr. Douglas G. Aspros
- Dr. Stuart Brown
- Dr. David Granstrom (Liaison-Trustee)

In August 2016, AVMA PLIT CEO Dr. Janet Donlin was named executive vice president/chief executive officer of the AVMA, and Dr. Andrew Clark, MBA, was named chief executive officer of the AVMA PLIT. The PLIT staff also consists of three Trust Veterinarians, Dr. Linda Ellis, Dr. Nina Mouledous, and Dr. Karen Wernette; and Executive Administrator, Ms. Ali Shomali. The Trust Veterinarians have many years of practice experience. They review all reported veterinary malpractice claims and speak to veterinarians about potential allegations of malpractice to provide guidance.

In 2016, more than 3,100 professional liability claims were reported. Throughout the claims cycle, the Trust Veterinarians provide professional veterinary advice to the insurance company and its attorneys, and refer the insurance company to qualified veterinary experts to assist in defense. The Trust Veterinarians also attend and present at veterinary conventions. They annually present at 36 colleges/schools of veterinary medicine on the importance of good communication skills to avoid allegations of veterinary negligence and complaints filed with state licensing boards against a veterinary license.

2017 Initiatives

Several new program and educational projects are planned for 2017, including:

- Student Social Media on Facebook at AVMAPLITSTUDENTS
- Business insurance client testimonial campaign
- Development of three business insurance explainer videos
- Re-launch of our personal lines program

Summary

Throughout our fifty-fifth year of dedicated service, the PLIT will again deliver on our promise and provide the most complete and supportive professional insurance program designed for and by veterinarians. We’re here to protect you, your reputation, and our profession. The AVMA PLIT is excited to deliver on our promise of “Protecting you through it all” for another 50 years and beyond.