

Report of the AVMA Task Force on Governance and Member Participation

June 7, 2013

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AVMA Task Force on Governance and Membership Participation was charged with reviewing and evaluating the AVMA governance system and determining if the current system was an optimal one to meet the future needs of the membership, the association and the profession. This charge evolved from Resolution 10 of the AVMA House of Delegates at its 2011 Regular Annual Session, and both the Task Force and its charge were established by the AVMA Executive Board in August 2011. The AVMA 20/20 Vision Commission report, along with other key management information resources, was used as a guiding document for the governance qualities and attributes needed for an AVMA governance system of the future.

With those qualities and attributes in mind, along with valuable contributions from sources both internal and external to the AVMA, the Task Force has developed a governance system that will deliver on the criteria that the 20/20 Vision Commission recommended.

The Task Force incorporated numerous inputs into its deliberations including extensive environmental scanning, the results of the AVMA Summit on Governance in July 2012 that generated eight potential governance models with input from 60 leading representatives of the profession, feedback from the House of Delegates and other key members at the 2013 AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference, and continuous feedback from the AVMA website, social media, webinars, online surveys, and one-on-one encounters.

Every aspect of the new governance model is founded upon this information in addition to well-researched association practices and trends that are responding to the rapidly evolving changes in the world's demographics, economies, and technologies. These trends demonstrate that it is not a matter of whether or not to change, but how much and how quickly.

Our model delivers upon the following:

- *Being more responsive to membership needs* by becoming more structurally effective and efficient and harnessing new communication technologies
- *Providing better value on investment* by becoming more focused, results oriented, and accountable

- *Serving members and the profession more efficiently and effectively* by eliminating redundancy, and focusing our efforts on programs, benefits and services that are meaningful and of value
- *Being nimble enough to meet future governance challenges* by appropriately scaling the governance system and creating efficient communication channels to be able to thoughtfully weigh simultaneous critical issues and respond in a timely fashion
- *Provide volunteer opportunities that are rewarding* by ensuring that volunteer time is used as efficiently as possible through a system that encourages participation at many levels and opportunities that are matched on a skills and knowledge basis

The proposed governance model will incorporate:

- **A Board of Directors (BOD)** that will act as the one body with fiduciary responsibility, management responsibility, and policy authority. It will consist of 19 members – 4 officers, 13 directors and the Executive Vice President (EVP) and the Assistant EVP serving *ex officio*. Of the 13 directors, 11 will represent current geographic districts.
- **Advisory Councils (AC)** will be constituted in six core areas: *Economics and Practice, Animal Welfare and Ethics, Education, Governmental and External Relations, Scientific Activities, and Membership and Governance*. Each Council will be responsible to identify issues of concern to the AVMA and the veterinary profession, and study issues as requested by the Board of Directors in order to provide recommendations for consideration by the Board of Directors. Each council will be supported by task forces and work groups as necessary to deliver on specific objectives. Additionally, communication mechanisms will be in place to gather input from interested members via a variety of means.
- **A Volunteer Resources Committee (VRC)** will seek and select leaders to fill the various volunteer leadership positions based on important skills and knowledge criteria. In essence, the VRC will act as the human resources department for AVMA's volunteer membership and be responsible for identifying and recruiting the best candidates for the various volunteer leadership positions.
- **A Veterinary Issues Forum (VIF)** will bring various state and allied veterinary associations, along with additional interested stakeholders, together face-to-face annually to solicit their views and engage in environmental scanning and strategic issue identification that will further enhance and strengthen the future of the veterinary profession.

The beauty of the new proposed model is that it is a blend of what may appear very familiar combined with new structures and processes that will help achieve what is best for the future of AVMA's membership and the profession as a whole.

AVMA has a rich 150-year heritage and history – upon which we base our proposal for the future. We cannot succeed in the future if we do not remember the lessons of the past. Yet we must remember that it is the future we must focus upon. The nearly half of AVMA's members who have graduated within the last 15 years want to become engaged in their association now, not years from now, and want to do it in a way that is meaningful and valuable.

It is time to think past ourselves and consider what is best for the future of the association. It is our hope that our proposed governance model helps ensure that AVMA's next 150 years will be as rich and rewarding for our membership and the profession as the last 150 years have been.