Program Description:
The AVMA Legislative Fly-In is a two-day workshop to introduce and initiate veterinary student participation in the legislative process and to educate students and Members of Congress on public policy issues facing the veterinary profession. This year the Legislative Fly-In will be just for SAVMA members.

Students will spend two days in Washington, D.C., during which they will learn about the legislative process and issues currently facing the veterinary profession, spend time on Capitol Hill visiting their legislators and discussing issues, and exploring that nation’s capitol.

Eligibility:
Veterinary students from each of the thirty-three SAVMA chapters represented in the SAVMA House of Delegates are eligible. Students may be in any year in the veterinary curriculum and have any level of experience with governmental relations; however participants must be a United States citizen. Each school may choose two representative students and one alternate student in a way they deem appropriate, and must provide this information to Matt Holland (mholIand3@illinois.edu) via the registration form by Friday, January 2, 2015. 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 Dates:
The educational program will begin the morning of Monday, March 2nd, and continue through Tuesday, March 3rd, with visits to Capitol Hill. We will also be having an additional welcome reception at the hotel on Sunday, March 1st from 5:00-7:00 PM. The reception is not mandatory based on travel schedules, but will be a great opportunity to meet other students and veterinarians. There are also tentative plans to have an AVMA Political Action Committee (PAC) event on Monday evening. This event is also not mandatory, but highly recommended. Travel home can be planned for the evening of Tuesday, March 3rd, with departing flights no earlier than 4:00 pm EST.

Hotel/Program Location:
The educational program will take place at:

Embassy Suites Hotel
1250 22nd St NW
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 857-3388

Check-in will be on Sunday, March 1st and check-out will be on Tuesday, March 3rd. Rooms have been blocked for students attending the conference at a group rate of $229 per night (not including taxes, incidentals, or parking). Please contact the Hotel’s reservations line at 1-202-857-3388 or online at Embassy Suites-Washington D.C., the reservation group name SAVMA Fly-In 2015 and the group code: MED. The deadline to reserve a room using the group code is February 13, 2015. It is not required for students to stay at the hotel if other accommodations are available, but those must be able to arrive to the hotel on time for the workshop each day.
Washington, D.C. is served by three airports: Ronald Reagan National Airport, Washington Dulles, and Baltimore Washington. The closest and most convenient airport is Ronald Reagan National Airport. This airport is located off the blue/yellow line on the metro. The Embassy suites Hotel is located walking distance from the Foggy Bottom stop on the blue/orange line. More information about the Washington, D.C. metro system can be found at http://washington.org/DC-guide-to/metrail.

Need money to cover hotel and travel expenses?

We are excited to announce that Banfield® Pet Hospital is graciously sponsoring the 2015 AVMA Legislative Fly-In, which will allow stipends $200 per student! This is an amazing opportunity, which will provide a significant offset to costs and travel. SAVMA has also been able to allocate an additional $80 per attendee for the Fly-In. Therefore, a total stipend of $280 per student will be available.

If additional funding is needed, we encourage you to seek 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 your VMA president and explain it yourself! Other avenues of sponsorship could include: your SCAVMA, allied industry, pharmaceutical companies, and local veterinary alumni associations!

If you want to hear more about opportunity first-hand, included in this information packet is an article published in the Vet Gazette written veterinary students who attended the 2014 AVMA Student Fly-In.

Questions? PLEASE CONTACT:
Erin Zepp
Email: ejzepp@ncsu.edu
Phone: 301-651-4695

Matt Holland
Email: mhollnd3@illinois.edu
Phone: 847-989-5474

Special thanks to Banfield and our sponsors for their support, which will provide funding for Veterinary Student Travel & Expense Stipends:

Banfield Pet Hospital
American Veterinary Medical Association
Student American Veterinary Medical Association

Additional program support provided by:

American Veterinary Medical Foundation
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 2015 AVMA Legislative Fly-In Day in Washington D.C. This workshop aims to encourage veterinarians and 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 two students from each of the thirty three schools with active membership in the Student AVMA to visit D.C. March 1-3, 2015. 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 $229 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

2013 AVMA Student Legislative Fly-In

Tuesday, March 19, 2013
Sarah Fry, Tayler Foshee, and Stef Bolas
Oklahoma State University

On March 4th & 5th, 2013 we had the opportunity to attend the AVMA Student Legislative Fly-In in Washington D.C. This event occurs annually and allows students to learn about the legislative process. It shows the impact constituents can have on the legislative process and how to communicate with your congressmen to make a positive impact on your community and profession. As well as the alternative governmental career paths that veterinarians can pursue.

On the first day of the event, we learned about current legislation impacting veterinary medicine and what role the AVMA’s Governmental Relations Division plays in representing the veterinary profession on Capitol Hill. Two pieces of legislation were our focus for the Fly-in, the Horse Protection Act Amendment and the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act Amendment. Most of the day was spent preparing for our meetings with our congressmen about these amendments. We also had the opportunity to learn about the AVMA Congressional Fellowship by speaking with a current and past fellow. They answered many of our questions about what it is like to work on Capitol Hill.

On the second day of the Student Legislative Fly-In, we each met with our respective congressional members. Walking through the legislative buildings and the Capitol building was an amazing experience. Before our meetings, we spoke with Representative Kurt Schrader (D-OR) and Representative Ted Yoho (R-FL). They are veterinarians who are currently serving in Congress. They offered their guidance for young people entering the veterinary profession and also shared their thoughts on the legislative process. It was amazing to speak with veterinarians who are working to improve our nation. The meetings with congressional staff members were very exciting and they were receptive to hearing our personal stories and opinions.

The AVMA Student Legislative Fly-In was a great experience and we learned so much about the legislative process. We took away a sense of how important it is for veterinarians and veterinary students to stay involved in the legislative process and aware of current legislation because it can truly affect the future of our profession. It also showed us another career path veterinarians can pursue by working in government. Veterinarians have many skills that are valuable in careers in government such as communication, problem-solving and scientific interpretation. The Governmental Relations Division of the AVMA was amazing and helpful. We could not have asked for a better first experience in Washington D.C. If you are interested in further information on pieces of legislation that are important to the veterinary profession, we encourage you to visit the AVMA CAN website.
**Veterinary Student Legislative Fly-In**

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

The Veterinary Student Legislative Fly-In 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.”
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What can I expect at this event?
   a. You will hear speakers from the AVMA Governmental Relations Division (GRD) discuss legislative issues, how to present your opinion on topics to congressional members and staffers appropriately and effectively, how to become involved in the legislative process, and what internship/externship opportunities are available with the GRD. Once you have been briefed on the important legislative topics, you will meet with your congressional leaders to present the AVMA’s view on these issues.

2. I am an alternate, what does this mean?
   a. We have spaces for 66 students (2 from each of the 33 schools in the SAVMA House of Delegates). In the event a school is unable to send students due to cost restrictions or busy exam schedules, the Fly-In Chairs will select individuals from the alternate pool to fill the 66 spots. In this event, it is possible that three students from the same school could attend. For example, if NCSU CVM can only send one student, then we could randomly select the alternate from the University of Illinois, allowing all three of their students to attend the event.
   b. The alternate is not a replacement in case the first two people from your school can no longer attend. Only the Fly-In Chairs can select alternates. Remember, once we submit the final names to the AVMA GRD, they start arranging meetings with congressional leaders. This undertaking involves a lot of effort and it is not possible to arrange meetings with new representatives on short notice. Thus, once the final list of names is submitted on January 2, if a selected student can no longer attend that spot will remain. For this reason, we ask that everyone who applies to attend this event be committed to attending the event.
   c. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact Erin Zepp for clarification (ejzepp@ncsu.edu).

3. What is the attire?
   a. Business attire is appropriate for both day sessions March 2nd–March 3rd. Men should wear a suit and tie; women can wear a business suit (skirt or slacks) or an appropriate dress. Remember, you are meeting with your congressional members and representing the AVMA. So, please look professional. I recommend bringing comfortable shoes, because you will have take the Metro and walk to the Capitol building for meetings.
   b. There are two other events: a Welcome Reception and a (PAC) event. Dress for these events is business casual. There will be opportunities to network, so look professional but dress comfortably.

4. Do I book my own transportation?
   a. Yes, you must book your own transportation to and from the event. Do not book a flight prior to 4 pm EST on Tuesday because meeting with congressional members do run late into the afternoon.

5. Do I have to stay at the hotel?
   a. No you do not. Many people stay with friends and family that they know in the D.C. area. If you choose to not stay at the hotel, please plan accordingly to ensure you arrive at the hotel on time for the daily events.

6. Can I bring my significant other?
   a. Unfortunately, we only can accommodate 66 students, so no additional guests are allowed.

7. Do I have to be registered to vote?
   a. YES!! You must be a registered voter to participate in this event, since you will be meeting with congressional leaders from your voting district.
8. The event is on a Monday and Tuesday, what if I can’t miss class?
   a. We ask that when you register you make a commitment to attend and uphold that commitment. We do understand that circumstances may arise where you cannot attend. In those cases, please let Matt Holland or Erin Zepp know that you cannot attend as early as possible. If it is still early enough before the event, then we can try to find an alternate to take your spot.

9. I am the only person or the only (male/female) from my school going, how can I find a roommate?
   a. Matt Holland will be in charge of assisting people in finding roommates. Please email him (mhollnd3@illinois.edu) if you are looking to share a room.

10. When will I receive my reimbursement check?
    a. You should receive your check at the event (March 1-3, 2015). Since a third party prepares the checks, we cannot promise this delivery date. However, we will do our best to get everyone their checks ASAP.