

2020 AVMA BOARD CHAIR SPEECH

Dr. Kratt and members of the House—the Board of Directors has not met in-person since your last session in January 2020. However, the Board has met 15 times virtually since that time. The minutes from those meetings have been available to the House throughout the year at AVMA Connections. The Board of Directors has just completed its last meeting of the 2019-2020 Association year, and those minutes will also be available at AVMA Connections.

It is an honor for me to provide a recap of the association year as the chair of the board of directors.

We have had so many challenges and hardships in the past six months, it makes us sometimes lose sight of all the good that has also taken place. But the AVMA has made some exceptional progress on behalf of the profession and I thank all of you for your contribution to that progress. I'd like to review some of that positive work.

After a great convention last year in Washington DC, the board and staff were busy with many ongoing projects that you are familiar with such as the digital platform AVMA AXON and expanding AVMA's resources in diversity, equity and inclusion; personal wellbeing; personal finance, practice management, professional policy guidance and many more as well as specific programs to help you in your practices such as telemedicine resources and AVMA Direct Connect.

The board has also been active this year working with all of our councils and committees, continuing efforts in providing resources with cannabis, telemedicine, opioids, disaster preparedness, antimicrobials, and the list goes on. We have over 400 very dedicated volunteers who give their time, energy, and expertise on our many councils and committees. And that is a big part of the strength of AVMA.

All of the District directors have been very busy and engaged as we attended many state and allied meetings in the fall and winter. This is an essential aspect of the board work as we learn from all of you and your organizations. Please know during our discussions, each director brings the perspective of state VMA's, large and small as well as all allied groups as we make important decisions for the AVMA. So thank you for welcoming BOD members at these meetings throughout the year. We certainly hope in this new era of virtual work we can maintain the same level of interaction and collaboration with all of you. We have also welcomed the participation of Sandy Willis HAC chair and the Student AVMA president (now Dr. Kyre Larrabee) and Ms. Marie Bucko in our meetings throughout the year and we welcome SAVMA President-Elect Hidayah Martinez-Jaka to this meeting. These perspectives are also an important part of our deliberations.

The amazing work by the HOD on Capitol Hill last year in DC has enabled the AVMA to advocate for veterinarians at an even higher level. This is a critically important facet of AVMA's purpose, as we are the voice on Capitol Hill advocating for animal related issues, and small business issues that are vitally important to our profession and our veterinary colleagues.

Thinking about our 95,000-plus members, one of our goals is to see all veterinarians in professionally rewarding careers. We have developed and are now expanding resources for early career veterinarians. These resources have proven to be highly valued by our recent graduates – reflected by the fact that our

member satisfaction with recent graduate members is at all-time highs. Now, we are working to expand our focus to mid-career veterinarians. Our data shows that mid-career members are faced with unique challenges that threaten their career satisfaction. They need additional resources and support and are looking to the AVMA for resources specific to their mid-career challenges. The AVMA is working to expand the resources that we created so successfully for early career members to our mid-career members as well. We want everyone to know that at any level or step in your career, AVMA is here to support you.

A highlight of the year is we are happy to partner with Merck on the second veterinary wellbeing study. The information is helping provide insights as we develop resources for members and support the entire veterinary family. Wellbeing is an integral part of a long professionally rewarding career in the veterinary profession. Again, wellbeing and success for all AVMA members is the top goal.

Listening to our members is critical for the BOD, our members continually tell us one of the most important things AVMA can do is publicly promote the important role of veterinarians. Our public visibility gained traction at VLC with Drs Howe, Kratt, and deJong providing multiple interviews with larger media outlets. This outreach has progressed the last few months and just in the first 7 months of 2020 the AVMA was featured in over 12,000 national and regional news stories, generating over 20 billion media impressions.

2020 continues to change our lives in dramatic ways. Early in the year, with the onset the global pandemic, the AVMA bod and staff worked quickly to make difficult but necessary decisions to move into an exclusively virtual format to protect our staff and volunteers. In person council and committee meetings were transitioned to electronic formats beginning in March, AVMA staff started working remotely, fast forward and we are here in a virtual HOD meeting. Under the direction of Dr Donlin staff efforts turned quickly to provide urgent and relevant resources for our members as the delivery of care adapted. Veterinarians were faced with providing the same level of care to our patients while protecting clients and staff from COVID 19 and keeping their businesses running. AVMA BOD and staff rallied around the needs of our members working day and night to get the most updated information in the hands of our members. AVMA Staff in Washington DC were also working around the clock to insure veterinarians were considered essential in the workforce and our businesses were able to access the assistance provided by the stimulus packages and continue to support their employees and businesses.

While the last year has provided multiple challenges, the AVMA was up for the challenge and will continue to work hard on behalf of ALL its members.

In closing, on behalf of the BOD directors, thank you for your participation in the HOD. The strength of the AVMA is volunteers like you who offer your time and expertise in helping face the many challenges ahead.