

2020 AVMA TRUST ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While 2020 presented many challenges to the veterinary profession – including a global pandemic – this period of uncertainty also underscored the importance of securing protection from unforeseen events. For AVMA members, the Trust was there to provide that protection in their personal as well as professional lives. From veterinarian-inspired coverages and new programs to support practice employees, to educational webinars and risk-mitigation resources, to a robust student outreach program and the work of the Trust Veterinarians, the AVMA Trust supported members through it all. Guided by our Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Trust Chair Dr. Joseph Kinnarney, and CEO Tracey Gray-Walker, the Trust pivoted to a virtual approach that allowed us to remain productive throughout the year, keeping our focus on the member experience while providing timely, relevant resources, services, and support.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Trust launched three new programs in 2020. The AVMA Trust **Association Retirement Plan** and the **Small-Group Employee Benefits Program** allow practice owners to offer important benefits to their teams, creating an environment in which they are better positioned to attract and retain employees. The **Short-Term Medical Insurance Plans** provide members with a tool to bridge gaps in medical coverage.
- In response to the pandemic, the Trust partnered with the AVMA throughout 2020 to develop and deliver over **50 COVID-related resources** on a wide range of safety, preparedness, and risk-management topics.
- The Trust Veterinarians and Student Services Representative delivered **126 (mostly virtual) webinars and presentations** to students and professional members, reaching over 10,000 veterinarians and veterinary students. The Trust Veterinarians and Member Advocate also engaged directly with members, fielding 818 telephone calls and 895 written communications, in addition to supporting over 3,300 claims.
- Introduced in the second quarter, an **Expedited Issuance Life Insurance** offer enables qualifying members to apply for 10- or 20-Year Level Term Life Insurance of up to \$500K of coverage (based on age) with limited underwriting and no labs or medical exams.
- A **Self-Service Portal**, launched early in 2020 through AVMA LIFE, provides insured members with 24/7 access to manage their accounts and update their coverages.
- The Trust introduced a safety module on **Workplace Harassment Prevention**. In partnership with S2 Learning and HUB International, the Trust delivered this module along with other **safety training courses** to members and their employees. The courses were viewed over 10,000 times.
- To provide more robust support for student members, the Trust veterinary team partnered with AVMA LIFE school agents and AVMA Trust school ambassadors to create **school-based teams** charged with setting goals and creating unique engagement plans for each campus.

- In November, the Trust added two team members who were charged with continuing to focus on the member experience through outreach and improved processes: **Marketing and Communications Manager** and **Program and Operations Manager**.

AVMA PLIT

AVMA PLIT is the premier facilitator of professional liability and business insurance in the veterinary profession. As of December 31, 2020, PLIT had **95,027 professional liability and business policies in force**, an increase of 1.55% from the previous year, and had collected over **\$106.2 million in premiums**, an increase of 2.69% over 2019. Premiums for new lines of coverage totaled over **\$8.1 million**.

Coverages currently sponsored by AVMA PLIT include:

INDIVIDUAL COVERAGE

- Professional Liability
- Veterinary License Defense Endorsement
- Animal Bailee Endorsement
- Personal Lines, which include:
 - Auto
 - Homeowner's
 - Renter's
- Identify Theft
- Veterinary Student Professional Liability

PRACTICE COVERAGE

- Business Owner's Package, which includes:
 - Property
 - General Liability
 - Business Interruption
 - Mechanical Breakdown
 - Enhanced Protection
- Workers' Compensation
- Employment Practices Liability
- Commercial Auto
- Flood
- Cyber / Data Breach

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY AND PERSONAL COVERAGE

Nearly **70,000 AVMA members** purchased professional liability insurance through the Trust in 2020. As of December 31, 2020, PLIT had **69,850 professional liability policies** in force – as well as more than **78,000 endorsements** (or add-ons) to those professional liability policies – and collected over **\$33.8 million in premiums**, an increase of 2.67% over 2019.

Coverage Type	Policies	Premium
Professional Liability	69,850	\$25,661,428
Veterinary License Defense Endorsement	56,597	\$6,263,083
Animal Bailee Endorsement	22,096	\$1,539,686
Veterinary Student Professional Liability	7,411	n/a
Auto / Homeowner's / Renter's	280	\$370,396
Identity Theft	107	\$12,811
TOTAL POLICIES & ENDORSEMENTS	156,341	\$33,847,404

BUSINESS INSURANCE

Veterinary practices of all sizes also leveraged AVMA PLIT for access to business insurance in 2020. As of December 31, 2020, PLIT had **17,379 business insurance policies** and endorsements in force and collected **premiums in excess of \$72.3 million**, an increase of 2.48% over 2019.

Coverage Type	Policies	Premium
Workers' Compensation	6,278	\$35,871,734
Property and General Liability	7,193	\$23,450,642
Employment Practices Liability	2,100	\$6,341,646
Commercial Auto	878	\$4,604,358
Other	930	\$2,082,346
TOTAL	17,379	\$72,350,726

NATIONAL PRACTICES

The National Practice team from our broker partner HUB International focuses on connecting with large practices to promote interest in the coverages and programs available through the AVMA Trust. Practices that elect coverage through the Trust must ensure that all DVMs are AVMA members. In 2020, the National Practices team generated 120 additional AVMA members, representing \$39,600 in additional revenue to AVMA as well as significant revenue for the Trust.

AVMA LIFE

Since 1957, the AVMA LIFE Trust has created access to veterinarian-inspired coverages to protect the lives and livelihoods of AVMA members. In recent years, some coverages have been expanded and new programs added to protect and support members' families and employees. In 2020, some coverages were further expanded to be available to AVMA employees and affiliated organizations.

Coverages currently sponsored by the AVMA LIFE Trust include:

DISABILITY

- Short-Term Disability Income
- Long-Term Disability Income
- Professional Overhead Expense
- Student Loan Disability

LIFE

- Term Life
- Family Group Life
- 45+ Term Life
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment
- Complimentary Student Life

HEALTH

- Hospital Indemnity Plan
- Critical Illness
- Dental
- Vision
- Long-Term Care
- Short-Term Medical

PACKAGES

- Student Basic Protection Package, which includes:
 - Disability Income Insurance
 - Special Semester Benefit
 - Term Life Insurance
 - Rabies Prophylaxis/Titer Benefit

- Member Basic Protection Package, which includes:
 - Long-Term Disability
 - Decreasing Group Term Life
 - Accidental Death and Dismemberment
 - Rabies Prophylaxis/Titer Benefit

EMPLOYEE PLANS

- Association Health Plan
- Small-Group Employee Benefits Program
- Association Retirement Plan

POLICY ACTIVITY

2020 was a year of steady growth for the AVMA LIFE Trust. As of December 31, 2020, over **26,000 members** were insured through AVMA LIFE, with **109,270 policies** in force, including over 16,000 policies for members’ spouses and children. These policies generated **\$38.7 million in premiums**, an increase of over 5.5 percent from 2019. Premiums for new lines of coverage grew by over 2 percent to over **\$3.6 million**.

Coverage Type	Policies	Premium
Disability Income	40,939	\$21,173,735
Life Insurance	29,174	\$15,824,643
Accident Death and Dismemberment	18,089	\$146,646
Hospital Indemnity / Critical Illness	2,753	\$557,016
Dental / Vision	1,747	\$1,002,278
TOTAL MEMBER POLICIES	92,702	\$38,704,318

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In October 2020, the Trust introduced the **AVMA Trust Association Retirement Plan (ARP)** in partnership with Transamerica, TAG Resources, and Envestnet Retirement Solutions. Designed to meet the unique needs of the veterinary profession, the ARP offers practices of all sizes the ability to offer retirement solutions for employees while taking advantage of cost efficiencies, simplified administration, and a reduced fiduciary burden. The program also offers a Solo 401(k) option for self-employed veterinarians.

- Through the partnership with The Hartford, the AVMA Trust launched the **AVMA Trust Small-Group Employee Benefits Program**. Available to veterinary practices with 2-50 employees, the program allows practices to offer team members Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance as well as Short- and Long-Term Disability Insurance. The program also provides several value-added services at no additional cost, including an employee assistance program, funeral planning and concierge services, estate guidance, beneficiary assistance, and travel assistance and ID theft protection.
- Gaps in medical coverage are not uncommon. To help members bridge these gaps, the Trust added access to **Short-Term Medical Insurance Plans** for AVMA members. Available for periods of 1 month to 364 days (and, in some cases, up to 36 months), these affordable plans offer simplified underwriting and are designed for members who do not have or cannot get major medical coverage, are between jobs, or are waiting for Medicare coverage to begin. The plans also offer an option for students who are waiting for other health coverage to start.
- When pandemic restrictions caused some members to delay the decision to purchase life insurance, the AVMA LIFE Trust responded with an **Expedited Issuance Life Insurance** offer, enabling qualifying members to apply for 10- or 20-Year Level Term Life Insurance with limited underwriting and no labs or medical exams. Members under the age of 40 can apply for amounts up to \$750,000, while those between the ages of 40 and 50 can apply for as much as \$500,000. This offer was extended several times throughout the year and now remains in effect through September 30, 2021.
- A **Self-Service Portal**, launched early in 2020, provides insured members with 24/7 access to manage their accounts. Through the portal, members can change or update their contact information, adjust coverage, download certificates, and add or remove beneficiaries. They also have the ability to make payments, set recurring payments, view their payment history, or elect a paperless billing option.
- SAVMA members also benefited from changes introduced in 2020. An **online registration portal** now makes it easier for SAVMA members to register for Complimentary Student Life Insurance and designate their beneficiaries. Plus, SAVMA members are now able to purchase **Long-Term Disability coverage** previously available only to professional AVMA members.
- The AVMA LIFE Trust expanded access to additional offerings to allow **coverage for employees of the AVMA** and its affiliated associations and organizations.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

The COVID-19 pandemic was the central challenge of 2020. It deeply affected the lives and livelihoods of AVMA members and veterinary students. To support them through these challenging times, the Trust rapidly adapted its outreach and educational efforts to focus more heavily on digital solutions, shifting to educational webinars, virtual participation in professional events, and online delivery of content. Throughout, the Trust remained committed to the member-centric, collaborative approach it had initiated in 2019.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Trust partnered with the AVMA throughout 2020 to develop and deliver over 50 resources on a wide range of safety and preparedness topics. These included:

- Creating a Business Preparedness Plan (landing page)
- Coronavirus and Insurance Coverage Considerations (landing page)
- Managing Your Veterinary Practice through the Coronavirus Crisis (webinar)
- Communication in Veterinary Practice in the COVID-19 Crisis (webinar)
- COVID-19 Insurance Claims & CARES Leave Provisions (webinar)
- Cyber Solutions for Your Practice (webinar)
- AVMA and AVMA Trust COVID-19 Member FAQs (digital resource)
- Resuming Veterinary Practice Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic (digital guidebook)

AVMA TRUST VETERINARIANS

The AVMA Trust Veterinarians are a central component of the Trust's commitment to the member experience and a key benefit to insured members. In addition to reviewing all professional liability claims, the Trust Veterinarians provide educational seminars for students and members of the profession, make presentations at professional events, develop risk-management resources, act as content experts for all Trust publications, and offer direct support to fellow veterinarians during times of crisis. In 2020, the Trust Veterinarians:

- Reviewed a total of 3,315 claims, then re-reviewed 1,739 claims
- Fielded 566 calls from fellow veterinarians to discuss difficult practice issues
- Provided 17 online webinars (including two Axon webinars) that garnered 8,088 registrants and 3,480 live attendees
- Made 37 presentations (mostly virtual) at conventions and meetings on topics including communication, risk mitigation, professional liability, and business insurance and reaching over 10,000 students and veterinary professionals
- Offered six live, interactive RACE-approved webinars, available for CE credit:
 - Protecting Your Assets 101: Veterinary Professional Liability and Veterinary License Defense
 - Insights: Beginning the Journey
 - Communication: Challenging Situations in Veterinary Medicine
 - Insights: Team Effectiveness
 - Protecting Your Assets 102: Business Insurance for Veterinary Practices
 - Risk Management for Veterinary Practices

TRUST MEMBER ADVOCATE AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the Trust Veterinarians, the Trust Member Advocate is available to members in need of assistance with insurance policies or claim appeals. The Member Advocate serves as an ally for members during problem resolution. This year, the Member Advocate answered 252 calls and 895 written inquiries from members on a range of topics including medical coverage (546), disability insurance and

hospital indemnity (262), participation by the Trust in veterinary events and conventions (173), general insurance inquiries and membership questions (171), and ACH verification or billing issues (125).

The Trust also initiated a process improvement initiative in 2020 to maintain operating efficiency and improve members' interactions with the Trust and its insurance partners. All operational processes are under review and are being documented for reference. These process improvements, albeit behind the scenes, ultimately will allow members to engage with the Trust with ease and instill a positive member experience.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The AVMA Trust team, led by the AVMA Trust Student Services Representative, continued to provide support to student members. As the pandemic caused a sharp pivot from veterinary education as usual to optimizing learning through virtual educational opportunities, the AVMA Trust was there to support the shift. The team responded quickly by providing recorded lectures for curriculum presentations as well as delivering over 70 total presentations in the new virtual formats.

The veterinary team at the AVMA Trust also worked with the network of AVMA LIFE school agents and the AVMA Trust student ambassadors at each school to form school teams. Each team identified goals for the support of students at the individual school. Together, the school teams and the Student Services Representative:

- Recorded a webinar for Class of 2020 graduates, entitled *Planning Your Transition*
- Responded to questions about coverage from new graduates
- Participated in orientations, club fairs, and extra-curricular meetings to educate on the value of SAVMA membership and AVMA Trust support for SAVMA members
- Implemented a member retention campaign to the class of 2021 in fall 2020, identifying key benefits for new graduates
- Developed a "Welcome to Clinics" resource to support student preparation for clinical rotations
- Developed a presentation, entitled *Making the Most of Clinical Experiences*, to explain insurance for volunteering in veterinary practice
- Provided complimentary veterinary student professional liability coverage for over 7,000 SAVMA members and complimentary life insurance coverage for over 10,000 students studying in the U.S.
- Responded to life insurance claims after the death of two veterinary students
- In conjunction with SAVMA and AVMA, continued to support the "ALL for Students" program, which provides events and activities to support veterinary student wellbeing, leadership development and professional development
- Supported the Veterinary Business Management Association (VBMA) by participating in the national leadership meeting in January 2020, providing ongoing support of the national organization, and making presentations to individual chapters on the role of organized veterinary medicine and risk-management in veterinary medicine

SAFETY TRAINING

The AVMA Trust has partnered with HUB International – one of its broker partners – and S2 Learning to deliver safety training courses to members and their employees. In 2020, the courses were viewed well over 10,000 times. 2020 also saw the addition of a training module on Workplace Harassment Prevention. The S2 Learning site houses the following courses:

- Workplace Harassment Prevention
- Small Animal Restraint and Bite Prevention
- Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls
- Preventing Back Injuries
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Controlled Substances
- Hazard Communication
- Managing Regulatory Inspections

EVENTS PARTICIPATION

Due to COVID-19-related cancellations, the Trust attended only three major *live* events in 2020: **Veterinary Medicine Expo (VMX)**, **Western Veterinary Conference**, and **Midwest Veterinary Conference**. In addition, the Trust attended several *virtual* events, supporting a variety of organizations, including the **AVMA's** first-ever virtual convention. At the **SURGE** meeting, attended by 50 participants, the Trust delivered two well-received presentations on professional liability and business insurance. At the **VSPA Fall Conference**, also attended by 50 participants, the Trust delivered a 20-minute presentation entitled "What's new with the Trust." Finally, the Trust delivered a video presentation and custom-designed informational flyer for the 45 attendees of the **VMAE Fall Conference**.

ADVERTISING

In 2020, the Trust supported 42 state veterinary medical associations through advertising placements, an increase of 250% from the number of state VMAs supported in 2019. In addition, the Trust advertised with six national publications, including *JAVMA*, *IVECCS*, *Modern Equine Vet*, *DVM360*, *NAVCA*, and *EquiManagement*. In addition, the Trust sponsored three specialty associations/organizations in an advertising capacity:

- **VHMA:** In addition to logo recognition, we were able to survey VHMA members on practice health plans as well as secure several advertising initiatives, driving nearly 2,900 visits to our custom landing page for VHMA members.
- **AASV:** The Trust donated \$2,000 to this organization's fundraising raffle. We were slated to attend their annual event but had to drop out due to concerns over COVID-19.
- **Blunt Dissection:** The Trust sponsored the *Blunt Dissection* podcast hosted by Dr. Dave Nicols in February. The podcast had over 3,000 plays.

PUBLICATIONS AND BLOGS

The AVMA Trust's PLIT program published 11 newsletters, 5 issues of the *Newsbites* e-newsletter, and 13 blogs in 2020. In all, *Newsbites* was viewed over 85,000 times, while the newsletters received 12,439 views collectively, and the blogs were viewed over 1,000 times. The topics addressed in 2020 were as follows:

Professional Liability:

- Mobile Veterinarians & Your Practice
- Euthanasia Best Practices
- Medical Records and the Importance of Documentation
- A Closer Look at Professional Liability & License Defense Trends

Business Insurance:

- Resuming Regular Services during COVID-19

Safety Bulletin:

- Implementing a Hazard Communication Program
- Preventing Harassment at Your Practice
- Protecting Students and Volunteers

Species-Specific Newsletters:

- Companion Animal Update: Spay and Neuter Complications
- Equine Update: Equine Injection Complications Lead to Expensive Claims
- Production Medicine: Common Claims in Production Medicine

Blogs:

- COVID-19 Topics (2 blogs)
- Cyber Crimes (3 blogs)
- Personal Lines Insurance Coverage (3 blogs)
- Health and Wellness (2 blogs)
- Business Insurance (1 blog)
- Professional Liability (1 blog)
- Student Loans (1 blog)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Student Instagram. Using a strategy of active engagement, the Trust gained 2,303 followers to its unified, student-focused Instagram page (avmatruststudents) in 2020, more than doubling the number from 2019. This strategy included contests, outreach by Trust veterinarians, and requests for interaction from our audience. Our average reach per post was 4,492, while the average number of likes per post was 283 and the average engagement per post was a very strong 7.57%.

Instagram. The Trusts' unified Instagram page (avmalifeplit) increased its followers by 406 – or 30.1% percent – to a total of 1,755 in 2020. The 85 posts to the page had an average engagement rate of 4.39%.

Facebook. The AVMA LIFE Facebook page boasted 1,430 followers in 2020, an increase of 3.2% from 2019. The 125 posts to this page had an average engagement rate of 4.68%. The page's total reach for 2020 was 45,529 unique visitors.

LinkedIn. While less active than the other social media outlets, the AVMA LIFE LinkedIn page increased its number of followers by 11.4% to 313. The page's 101 posts generated an average engagement rate of 3.25%. The pages total reach was 1,900 unique visitors.

A LOOK AHEAD

Continuing to enhance member value through improved offerings, robust training and outreach, and a “member-first” approach to marketing and communications will be the hallmark of the Trust's activities in 2021. Some of the programs and activities planning for the coming year include the following:

- In 2019, the Trust began an effort to **integrate the AVMA LIFE and AVMA PLIT** into a unified entity with the goal of better serving members. This effort gained momentum in 2020 through cooperative marketing efforts, combined social media outreach, and co-branded participation at professional events. In 2021, the integration of the Trust will continue with a series of **integrated awareness-building and marketing campaigns** that focus on specific segments of AVMA membership, including practice owners, independent veterinarians, recent graduates, and veterinary students.
- In partnership with the AVMA, the Trust will develop veterinary practice-specific **Sexual Harassment Prevention training modules** that will be delivered through Axon as well as S2 Learning. One version will address CE requirements specific to Illinois; the other version will be available to veterinarians in other states.
- The AVMA Trust will develop and deliver six **Axon webinars** on topics including the benefits of the Association Retirement Plan to veterinarians and veterinary practices, best practices for veterinarians who work with students and volunteers, best practices for the students themselves, managing risk for early-career veterinarians, professional liability considerations, and key business coverages for veterinary practices.
- The Trust will continue to deliver relevant **COVID-related resources** to help practices navigate the ongoing pandemic restrictions and the ultimate return to non-pandemic procedures. Planned projects include Practice Briefs on best practices for ensuring safety during curbside service and tips for preventing or addressing license defense claims.
- To ensure the AVMA Trust's insurance offerings remain “best in class,” we will continue a **systematic review of all coverages** coupled with member satisfaction surveys and competitive market analysis to drive product improvement. In addition, the Trust will conduct an in-depth **member lifestyle survey** that will allow us to enhance our engagement and provide deeper value to members.



- The AVMA remains an essential partner to the Trust as we strive together to serve the veterinary profession. In 2021, we will continue to deepen our **collaboration with the AVMA** through coordinated marketing efforts, co-branded event participation, and development and delivery of educational resources.