

AVMA



American Veterinary Medical Association

---

1931 N. Meacham Rd.  
Suite 100  
Schaumburg, IL  
60173-4360  
phone 847.925.8070  
800.248.2862  
fax 847.925.1329  
www.avma.org

June 13, 2007

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation  
Office of Planning and Policy Support  
Attn: Strategic Plan Comments  
200 Independence Avenue, SW.  
Room 408B  
Washington, DC 20201

**Re: HHS DRAFT Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives - FY 2007-2012**

Dear Madam/Sir:

I am writing on behalf of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), established in 1863 and the largest veterinary medical association in the world. As a not-for-profit association established to advance the science and art of veterinary medicine, AVMA is the recognized national voice for the veterinary profession. The association's more than 75,000 members comprise approximately 86% of U.S. veterinarians.

The AVMA supports Health and Human Services' (HHS) promotion of our nation's public health through Secretary Leavitt's Strategic Goals. Disease prevention, basic and applied research, and disaster preparedness and response are examples of how the collaborative efforts among the wider public health community, including the veterinary profession, can promote optimal health for Americans.

The veterinary profession is committed to the promotion of public health. Veterinary practitioners devote much of their time in their careers working to prevent zoonotic disease transmission to animal owners and to educate owners about prevention of animal bites and scratches. In addition, many veterinarians work for the military and U.S. government to ensure safe, wholesome food for our nation. Other veterinarians research zoonotic diseases and other public-health related studies in academia, industry, and the U.S. government.

We believe that VMATs should be added to the last paragraph of "Workforce Readiness" within Strategic Objective 2.4. The AVMA's Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams interface with Commissioned Corps teams, similar to the DMATs.

The AVMA is proud of our Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams (VMATs), who have illustrated their expertise providing emergency veterinary care for animals in need during times of national emergencies, including the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks and the after effects of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in Louisiana and Mississippi. Our VMAT teams exemplify valor and excellence during times of emergencies, and they perform valuable public health functions.

We commend HHS for its vision in the development of the Strategic Goals. We applaud HHS for further strengthening the public health infrastructure, and we look forward to continued collaboration and partnerships with HHS.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Lynne A. White (800-248-2862 ext. 6784 or [lwhite@avma.org](mailto:lwhite@avma.org)), should you need any additional information or explanation of AVMA's comments.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce W. Little". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Bruce W. Little, DVM  
Executive Vice President

BWL/LAW