

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WILDLIFE VETERINARIANS POSITION STATEMENT ON ONE HEALTH

Health care stewards of animals and humans face unprecedented challenges associated with emerging pathogens, loss of biodiversity, climate change, and explosive human population growth resulting in habitat loss and increased wildlife/human interactions. About 60% of existing human pathogens, and more than 75% of those appearing over the past two decades, are zoonotic. Many of these have a link with wildlife. An interdisciplinary “One Health” approach is needed that involves veterinarians, physicians, biologists, public health experts, and environmental health professionals, working to collaboratively address health concerns associated with these complex issues.

The concept of One Health, previously termed One Medicine, is not new; the concept was promoted by William Osler and Rudolf Virchow in the 1800s and was then revisited by Calvin Schwabe in the 1960s. Recent health emergencies are revitalizing the concept for application today. The conservation community, with leadership from organizations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, is recognizing the importance of One Health. Many human and animal medicine organizations, including the American Medical Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association, have endorsed the concept of One Health as a strategic need in health care transformation. In light of the integral role of healthy wildlife in the conservation and health of all species, the position of the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians is presented in the following statements on One Health.

The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians recognizes that:

- The majority of recently emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, and many are linked to wildlife;
- The rise in emerging and resurging infectious diseases threatens not only human and domestic animals, but also wildlife species and ecosystems;
- By their very nature, the fields of veterinary and human medicine are complementary and synergistic in confronting, controlling, and preventing zoonotic diseases and their transmission among species; and
- A One Health approach aims to promote and implement meaningful collaboration and communication between veterinary medicine, human medicine, wildlife management, and multiple allied disciplines working locally, nationally, and globally to attain optimal health for people, animals, and our shared environment.

The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians supports:

- Promoting and implementing a One Health approach that includes wildlife health science as an essential component of multidisciplinary collaborations;
- Monitoring, preventing, controlling and mitigating cross-species disease in ways that recognize wildlife as a casualty of disease as well as a potential reservoir;
- Enhancing the capacity of international, federal, state, and local wildlife agencies, tribal nations, and non-governmental organizations to plan, prevent,

and respond to wildlife disease using adaptive, holistic approaches that take the complex interaction between all species into full account;

- Funding multidisciplinary efforts for the development of diagnostic methods, vaccines, treatments, and management actions for the prevention and control of diseases across species;
- Developing educational and outreach programs that communicate and promote the importance of healthy wildlife and the role of wildlife veterinarians and wildlife biologists in One Health;
- Applying additional regulation on trade and movement of wildlife and wildlife products in order to protect wildlife populations, while simultaneously decreasing the risk for disease movement, cross-species transmission, and development of novel host-pathogen relationships; and
- Disease management that restricts the mass culling of free-ranging wildlife to situations where there is multidisciplinary scientific consensus that a wildlife population poses an urgent, significant threat to human health, food security, or wildlife health more broadly.