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**WORLD VETERINARY
ASSOCIATION (AISBL)**

Rue Washington 40
1050 Brussels, Belgium

E secretariat@worldvet.org

www.worldvet.org

VVA POSITION STATEMENT ON ONE HEALTH

VVA POSITION

The World Veterinary Association (WVA) advocates and supports the advancement of One Health (OH). The health and well-being of people, animals, plants, and their interconnected ecosystems depend on strategic, effective and sustainable collaborative partnerships among professions, disciplines and societies.

The WVA concurs with the definition of One Health developed by the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) and supports the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA), which was launched by the [Quadripartite](#) in 2022.^{1,7}

With respect to One Health, the WVA:

- Recognizes that veterinarians are health professionals and the first and utmost line of defense against diseases of animal origin that could threaten global health security and equity, playing a key role in responding to pandemics, environmental disasters, bioterrorism threats, and war. WVA concurs with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), which was developed by the International Labor Organization (ILO; a UN agency) that [refers to veterinarians](#) as health professionals. ISCO 2008 defines *health professionals* as those who "conduct research, improve or develop concepts, theories and operational methods, and apply scientific knowledge relating to medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, and promotion of health equity."
 - Recognizes that veterinarians enhance the health of animal and human populations by practicing veterinary medicine, supporting conservation medicine, antimicrobial stewardship, food safety, security and sovereignty.
 - Acknowledges that OH-integrated approaches are vital in preventing and solving complex health risks worldwide. The linkages between biodiversity, climate change, habitat loss and health threats are of importance to advance OH implementation and strengthen OH capacity building.
 - WVA actively promotes resources developed by the Quadripartite through the OH JPA to its member associations.
 - Recognizes [EcoHealth](#), [Planetary Health](#), [Population Health](#), [Conservation Medicine](#), [Oceans Health](#), [One Welfare](#) differences and similarities to One Health, thus far WVA envision these as integrated and connected.
 - Recognizes the role of the veterinary community in addressing the drivers of global biodiversity loss and supports advancing the One Health with focus on [environment](#).
- Supports veterinarians who take a holistic, collaborative, and integrated OH approach when addressing emerging infectious and non-infectious diseases and other health threats, as such approaches provide several benefits for communities, including:
 - Improving OH systems for the mitigation of zoonotic disease spillover and the promotion and enhancement of health and well-being of domestic and wild animals in their environments;
 - Promoting training and capacity building, such as developing OH centers of excellence that focus on public education, research, and training, and encouraging collaboration

- among local community leaders, policy makers and other stakeholders with mutual respect and understanding;
 - Improving OH science literacy within the general public by enhancing and disseminating through OH approaches and actions on science-based facts.
 - Creating transdisciplinary and efficient OH actions that serve as reliable sources of information to professionals, policy makers, and the general public;
 - Working with local communities, indigenous peoples and minorities by listening, learning and sharing integrated holistic OH;
 - Fostering, officializing and implementing OH cooperative partnerships with human medicine, social, anthropological, and other specialists.
- Recognizes and credits tribal health systems and traditional knowledge.
- Recognizes that health and peace are closely connected.
- Recognizes animal-human-plant (photosynthetic organisms)-ecosystem interconnectedness.
- Recognizes biodiversity loss, conservation, and the preservation of the environment which overlap with the animal and human health interface. Many enzootic and emerging epidemics, neglected infectious diseases, and recent pandemics have been associated with massive deforestation, habitat destruction, human encroachment, illegal wildlife trade, increasing health risks, climate change and imbalance in nature.
- Agrees with the Bureau's 2023 draft text of the WHO convention agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response: A/INB/5/6 published on 2 June 2023.⁸
- Recognizes that forests' and oceans' health are integral to the concept of OH. The concept states that human, animal, plant, and environmental health is intrinsically connected and that by working to improve these areas together, a planet with productive economic approaches to valuing environmental assets, health and sustainable ecosystems can be established.
- Recognizes the importance to reduce health risks from wildlife consumption and trade through wildlife species conservation, education, diseases prevention and sustainable OH measures as advocated by <https://alliance-health-wildlife.org/>, <https://www.wildlifedisease.org/> and <https://www.wcs.org/>.
- Encourages community based OH awareness campaigns/ programs, education and sharing such as through schools, using layman terms, based on scientific knowledge.^{9,10}

VETERINARY SERVICES

In accomplishing the OH mission, veterinarians will:

- Support and enhance the sustainable health, well-being, and welfare of animals and humans (e.g., through treatment and prevention of diseases, detection and prevention of neglected and emerging zoonotic diseases, vaccination programs, pandemic and disaster preparedness and working to empower communities).
- Ensure animal health and safe animal products (e.g., prevent foodborne diseases and food fraud; oversee best practices for the use of animal medicines; health monitoring and disease surveillance; control health risks and wildlife trade; advise and support country legislations).
- Minimise the impact on the environment and natural resources (e.g., through conservation; prudent use of chemicals; integrated livestock agricultural forestry systems, as supported by livestock.org).
- Demonstrate effective stewardship in the use of antimicrobials to prevent resistance and pollution.

- Increase laboratory capacity for genomic and pathogen surveillance (e.g. pandemic preparedness).
- Strengthen collaborative national and global health surveillance system through OH.
- Collaborate for understanding climate change risks to oceans and subsequent health risks as stated in [Beyond One Ocean Health B1OH- Kiel Initiative](#))
- Improve community health and well-being through advances in animal, environmental and human/animal population health and strengthening the environmental aspects of OH, as advocated by [Nature4Health](#).
- Ensure the welfare and well-being of animals by supporting the development of alternative research methods while contributing to translational medicine and research discoveries that benefit humans, animals, plants and environmental health.
- Expand partnerships and strengthen OH networks with inclusion and respect of different cultures and local communities, policy makers and all other stakeholders.
- Contribute to global and economic health security by the implementation of the veterinary aspects of the International Health Regulations.

BACKGROUND

Veterinary medicine and veterinarians have always played an important role in One Health. The rapidly evolving field of OH requires knowledge, action and advocacy, firmly rooted in a veterinary transdisciplinary perspective through an integrative scope. Veterinarians are naturally part of the interdisciplinary OH scenario where humans, planetary health, plants and animals are connected. This is apparent through actionable examples such as prevention and management of zoonotic diseases; antimicrobial stewardship, especially in animal medicine and in the environment; non-communicable diseases and the associated risk factors; food safety and food security; participation in translational research; biomedicine, biotechnology and biosecurity; global health security; wildlife trade and health risks, governance and public policies; leaders and partners in organizations through integrated health approaches; and education and legislature advocacy. Animals are indicators (sentinels) of human diseases and environmental changes.

When veterinarians facilitate and honor human-animal bonds, they promote health and well-being across species in a way that enhances the health of all, including the whole planet.^{2,3,4,5} Veterinarians play an important role towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁶ through their contribution to human, animal health and well-being, economic development, and environmental sustainability. As health professionals, veterinarians achieve these objectives in a sustainable environment. Ultimately, the OH approach should lead to improved health, financial savings, and economic and environmental sustainability.¹³

ONE HEALTH EDUCATION Further described in the [WVA Position Statement on One Health Education](#).

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