American Veterinary Medical Law Association
Annual Report 2010
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1. **ABOUT THE AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL LAW ASSOCIATION**

The American Veterinary Medical Law Association (AVMLA) was incorporated in 1994 as a non-profit corporation to provide outstanding education for veterinarians and lawyers in the field of veterinary medical law and to facilitate the interaction of professional organizations, regulatory agencies and veterinary practice owners, managers and students with respect to the scope and effect of veterinary medical law on society.

**Practitioner Resources**

The AVMLA provides its members with valuable information and a forum for discussing the issues that shape the practice of veterinary law. We use a variety of mediums to keep our members informed and current on emerging issues, laws, regulations and cases. Membership benefits include access to the following resources:

- quarterly newsletter
- white papers and publication archives
- list serv and other on-line materials
- webinars
- annual continuing education (CE) program
- membership list.

**Annual Continuing Education Program**

Our CE program topics vary by year, but often address the following areas of law: corporate, employment, contract, animal, professional licensing and discipline, biologics and patents. Additional topics include veterinary compliance with federal, state and local units of government; legislative and regulatory activity; ethics and peer review.

**Networking**

The AVMLA holds annual meetings in conjunction with our CE program. This event, and the evening reception that accompanies it, provide excellent opportunities for networking. Our membership includes pioneers in the field of veterinary medical law, attorneys, veterinarians and other interested parties working in industry, professional associations, government agencies, education and both legal and veterinary private practices.
2. AVMLA Activities 2009 – 2010

AVMLA Delegates to AVMA

The AVMLA has nominated Anthony DeVito, Esq. of Bell & Johnson, Ltd. as the designee to the American Veterinary Medical Association’s (AVMA) Model Practice Act Task Force. AVMLA has also formed an internal task force, which Mr. DeVito will chair, to discuss issues related to the model practice act. Dr. Alison Marsh, Esq. of Banfield and Dr. Mark Logan are also members of the task force.

CE

The AVMLA offered continuing education opportunities for 2009 and 2010. In 2009, our topics included licensure defense, employment contracts, ethics, veterinary liens, current legislation and intellectual property issues. The 2010 program features sessions on defending and prosecuting veterinary malpractice claims, current legislation, representing zoo veterinarians, ethics, veterinary practice operations and veterinary practice sales.

Financials

For the 2010 membership year, the AVMLA has collected approximately $28,923 in annual dues to date. In 2010, the AVMLA Board voted to offer an honorarium to continuing education presenters. The modest honorarium of $200 per presenter will increase conference costs, but will serve as some compensation to the knowledgeable presenters who volunteer their time and talent to the AVMLA. Our annual conference cost just over $6,000 in 2009.

Other large ticket expenditures include the annual fee for our website, $3,500, and the costs of producing our newsletter which is estimated to be $2,500 for FY 2010. We also pay for access to Lexis, approximately $2,000 per year and for the services of an executive director at a cost of $8,000 per year. No dues increases are scheduled for 2011.

Marketing Committee

This year a marketing committee was formed to examine how the AVMLA may better reach veterinarians, attorneys and other professionals with an interest in veterinary medical law. The committee has met throughout the year and has produced a revised brochure for the AVMLA, recommended participation in NAVMEC, detailed below, and is currently investigating the possibility of a joint law symposium with other affiliated associations.

Membership

AVMLA counts among its members 88 attorneys, 52 veterinarians, 31 individuals who are both attorneys and veterinarians, 4 students and 24 other affiliated individuals. Currently, 199 individuals are members in the AVMLA.

NAVMEC

The North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium (NAVMEC) is a group of over 200 stakeholders in the veterinary profession who have joined together to discuss the educational requirements and competencies that they anticipate will be necessary for veterinary students to be successful in practice. President-Elect Thomas Chandler, Esq. of Hawley Troxell Ennis & Hawley LLP attended one of the sessions sponsored by NAVMEC to offer his insight as an attorney offering counsel to veterinary practices.

Publications

We continue to offer our Newsletter on a quarterly basis. Our editors are, Dr. Nancy Diehl, Esq., Julia Fullerton, Esq., Edwin Hightower, Esq. of Hightower Commercial Law Center, LLC, Dr. Brent Mayabb of Royal Canin, Thomas Chandler, Esq. of Hawley Troxell Ennis & Hawley LLP, and law student Sarah Oulton.

In 2009, the AVMLA produced a white paper on vaccine liability written by Dr. Sarah Babcock JD, Doug Jack, LL.B, Dr. Charlotte Lacroix JD, Christine Pfeiffer JD, and John Thomas, Esq. Dr. Elizabeth Settles, JD served as editor. The white paper is available on our website.
Our website also features white papers on the topics of animal guardianship and complementary and alternative veterinary medicine. In addition, the website offers access to the newsletter archives and the membership directory that is updated annually.

Our electronic publications include our bimonthly compilation of news items affecting the practice of veterinary medical law.

**Webinars**

The AVMLA began offering complementary webinars in January of 2010. Our first webinar was on the subject of non-economic damages. Discussion was led by AVMLA President Dr. Elizabeth Settles, JD of Pfizer and District Director Bonnie Lutz, Esq. of Klinedinst, PC. Forty-five AVMLA members attended.

Our second webinar, held in April, addressed employment issues affecting veterinary practices. Steve Berenter, Esq. of Hawley Troxell Ennis & Hawley LLP and Sean McMullen, Esq. of Lange, Thomas & McMullen, LLP led discussion and 30 AVMLA members attended.

The next webinar will be held on September 10, 2010 and will feature the topic of OSHA compliance. Phil Seibert of Safety Vet will present tips for veterinary practitioners to use in conforming to federal work place requirements. An additional webinar will be held in December 2010 on the topic of biologics. All presentations from the webinars are posted on the AVMLA website for review by members.