Join us at the 2016 AVMA Legislative Fly-in

The AVMA Governmental Relations Division is teaming up with SAVMA to host a joint 2016 Legislative Fly-in that will bring veterinary students and veterinarians to Washington, D.C., to participate in a two-day workshop.

The event will introduce participants to the legislative process and brief them on the federal legislation that impacts the veterinary profession. AVMA’s governmental relations team will spend the first day of the workshop educating participants on high-priority legislation before setting them loose on Capitol Hill to meet with their elected officials.

The AVMA Fly-in will open your eyes to the various ways in which AVMA members can use their veterinary degrees to shape public policy. Be sure to take advantage of the unique opportunity for veterinarians and veterinary students to get involved in federal advocacy.

Still not convinced? Check out what participants from last year’s event had to say about their experience: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSlmquhjQpw

Our voice is stronger with YOURS! Register now.
Eligibility and Registration:

Veterinary students from each of the SAVMA chapters represented in the SAVMA House of Delegates are eligible. Students may be in any year in the veterinary curriculum and have any level of experience with governmental relations; however, participants must be a United States citizen. Each school may choose two representative students and one alternate student in a way they deem appropriate, and must provide this information to Jessica Squires (jmsquire@purdue.edu) via the registration form by Monday, January 4. Based on the ultimate number of spots available, alternates will be chosen to attend the Fly-in via lottery. **Registration for the event is a commitment, so please make every effort to uphold that commitment.**

Program Dates:

The workshop will run from the morning of Monday, Feb. 29 through the late afternoon of Tuesday, March 1. There will be an optional welcome reception on Sunday, Feb. 28 from 5–7 p.m. Participants should plan their travel home on March 1 no earlier than 5 p.m. EST, following their visits to Capitol Hill.

Hotel/Program Location:

**Washington Marriott Georgetown**  
1221 22nd Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

[Book your group rate for AVMA Fly-in](#)  
Rooms will be blocked for $219 USD per night

Guests can also call the toll free number 1-800-228-9290 and mention “**American Veterinary Medical Association**” when making reservations. Please note that the cut-off date is February 5, 2016. Marriott provides complimentary internet in the guest rooms if you are a Marriott Rewards member. [Signing up is free.](#)

Transportation Information:

Washington, D.C., is served by three airports: the Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA), the Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD), and the Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI). The closest and most convenient airport is DCA which is on the D.C. Metro. The Marriott
Georgetown Hotel is located about four blocks from the Dupont Circle Metro station on the Red Line and about four blocks from the Foggy Bottom Metro Station on the Blue/Orange/Silver Line.

More information about the D.C. metro system can be found at http://www.wmata.com/

**Need money to cover hotel and travel expenses?**

We are excited to announce that Banfield® Pet Hospital is graciously sponsoring the 2016 AVMA Legislative Fly-in, which will allow stipends of $214 per student! This is an amazing opportunity, which will provide an offset to costs and travel. SAVMA has also been able to allocate an additional $120 per attendee for the Fly-in. Therefore, a total stipend of $334 per student will be available.

If additional funding is needed, we encourage you to seek from other sources, such as your state’s Veterinary Medical Association, your SCAVMA, allied industry, pharmaceutical companies, and local veterinary alumni associations! We have provided a form letter to help you explain the program and the benefits.

Add a little about yourself and send it off. Even better - call them up your and explain it yourself!

**Special thanks to Banfield for their support!**

Questions? PLEASE CONTACT:

Jessica Squires  
Email: jmsquire@purdue.edu

Matt Holland  
Email: mhollnd3@illinois.edu
Funding Request Sample Letter

***PLEASE NOTE***

This is meant as a backbone of information on the AVMA Fly-in. Please take time to personalize this letter for you and your state!

Dear xxxxxx,

My name is *enter name and a little about yourself*. I am attending the 2016 AVMA Legislative Fly-in in Washington D.C. This workshop aims to encourage veterinarians and veterinary students’ participation in the legislative process and educate students and members of congress on the public policy issues facing the veterinary profession. This program is hosted by the Student AVMA and the AVMA Governmental Relations Division. The Student American Veterinary Medical Association has several objectives for this program:

- To expose veterinary students to the legislative process by participation in an Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill.
- To educate students on current public policy issues facing the profession of veterinary medicine.
- To lobby Members of Congress on legislative issues important to the veterinary profession.
- To develop school advocates to serve as contacts to the GRD and AAVMC, and other interested organizations for future legislative endeavors.
- To help veterinary students learn the importance of working with their legislators both now while students and after graduation as veterinarians.

I hope this trip will broaden my perspective of organized veterinary medicine and provide me with tools to be involved, stay involved and involve others now and in the future, both nationally and within our state.

The program is open to two students from each of the schools with active membership in the Student AVMA to visit D.C. February 28 - March 1, 2016. I am contacting you in hopes to acquire sponsorship or funding to allow my participation in this educational endeavor. Any level of contribution will be a great help. My expected costs include $219 per night for the hotel and my travel expenses of about **$______**.

Please contact me **PROVIDE CONTACT INFO*** with any questions you may have. I am very excited about this opportunity and hope that it will allow me to have a positive impact on the future of our profession. Thank you for taking the time to consider supporting me in attending this new event.

Sincerely,
About Last Year’s Event:

Veterinary students urge Congress to act on higher education issues, support veterinarians in rural areas

Washington, D.C.—From the ever-increasing weight of student loans on the backs of young professionals to the lack of veterinary services across America’s rural communities, nearly 70 veterinary students had a lot to say when they met with their legislators this week in the nation’s capital as part of AVMA’s 2015 Legislative Fly-in. The two-day event gave students the chance to learn more about the federal legislative process and advocate for bills that impact the future of the veterinary profession and U.S. animal agriculture.

“It is always exciting for us to see so many young people come to Washington to share their views on issues that impact the veterinary profession and animal health and welfare,” said AVMA President Dr. Ted Cohn. “The rising cost of student debt is on a lot of these students ‘minds as they plan for their future careers, and opening up more opportunities for veterinarians to serve rural communities in need of public health or food animal medicine is also critical to our nation’s agricultural community. We would like to thank these students for exercising their civic duty and hope that the 114th Congress will be responsive to their concerns.”

The students focused their meetings with elected officials and their staff on a couple of high-priority pieces of legislation for the veterinary profession: the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Enhancement Act (S. 440) and the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.
Introduced in the Senate on Feb. 10, **S. 440** would help ensure that America’s ranchers and farmers get access to the veterinary care they desperately need by maximizing every dollar Congress appropriates to the VMLRP—a program that provides up to $25,000 annually in loan repayments to recipients who practice public health or food animal medicine in designated shortage areas across the country. By removing a 39 percent withholding tax on program awards, as Congress did for its counterpart program for human health medicine back in 2004, more veterinarians would be able to support rural communities in need of veterinary services. Since the program’s inception in 2010, 286 veterinarians have participated in the program, but had the tax been removed, 100 more veterinarians, out of the nearly 860 who have applied, could have served areas across the country.

The participants also talked with legislators about the burden that educational debt is having on young professionals, particularly in the veterinary medical field where the average graduating debt for veterinarians has increased roughly 7.5 percent annually over the last decade to $135,283 in 2014. The students urged Congress to alleviate this financial burden when it reauthorizes the Higher Education Act by: improving the terms and conditions on federal student loans for veterinary students; maintaining the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which provides incentives for veterinarians to practice in the public sector; and offering students the ability to reconsolidate or refinance their loans.

As part of their visit to the nation’s capital, the students also heard from three veterinarians in Congress, including co-chairs of the House Veterinary Medicine Caucus Reps. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.) and Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), as well as freshman Congressman Ralph Abraham (R-La.).

“I commend you for being up here. You guys are setting yourselves apart from the masses. You are doing today, what others won’t, so that you can do tomorrow what others can’t,” said Rep. Yoho. “I want you to look three to five years down the road. Where do you see yourself? It’s the preparation you’re doing right now that is setting yourself up [for your future]. ... Success is not built on convenience—if it was, everyone would be successful. Success is built on inconvenience, and it might have been easier for you guys to stay at home or be doing something else right now, but it’s by inconveniencing yourself today that is helping set up for your future.”

The 66 students represented 26 veterinary schools across the country. The seventh annual AVMA Legislative Fly-in was sponsored by Banfield Pet Hospital and the Student American Veterinary Medical Association and received additional support from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation. See the association’s website for more information about the annual legislative fly-in and visit the AVMA Congressional Advocacy Network’s Facebook page to view pictures from the event.

### The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world, with more than 86,500 member veterinarians worldwide engaged in a wide variety of professional activities and dedicated to the art and science of veterinary medicine.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What can I expect at this event?
   a. You will hear speakers from the AVMA Governmental Relations Division (GRD) discuss legislative issues, how to present your opinion on topics to congressional members and staffers appropriately and effectively, how to become involved in the legislative process, and what internship/externship opportunities are available with the GRD. Once you have been briefed on the important legislative topics, you will meet with your congressional leaders to present the AVMA’s view on these issues.

2. I am an alternate, what does this mean?
   a. We have space for 2 students from each of the schools represented in the SAVMA House of Delegates. In the event a school is unable to send students due to cost restrictions or busy exam schedules, the Fly-in Chairs will select individuals from the alternate pool to fill remaining spots. In this event, it is possible that three students from the same school could attend. For example, if NCSU CVM can only send one student, then we could randomly select the alternate from the University of Illinois, allowing all three of their students to attend the event.
   b. The alternate is not a replacement in case the first two people from your school can no longer attend. Only the Fly-in Chairs can select alternates. Remember, once we submit the final names to the AVMA GRD, they start arranging meetings with congressional leaders. This undertaking involves a lot of effort and it is not possible to arrange meetings with new representatives on short notice. Thus, once the final list of names is submitted on January 4, if a selected student can no longer attend that spot will remain. For this reason, we ask that everyone who applies to attend this event be committed to attending the event.
   c. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact Jessica Squires (jmsquire@purdue.edu) or Matt Holland (mholnd3@illinois.edu) for clarification.

3. What is the attire?
   a. Business attire is appropriate for both days. Men should wear a suit and tie; women can wear a business suit (skirt or slacks) or an appropriate dress. Remember, you are meeting with your congressional members and representing the AVMA/SAVMA. So, please look professional. I recommend bringing comfortable shoes, because you will have to take the Metro and walk to the Capitol building for meetings.
   b. There will be an evening Welcome Reception. Dress for this event is business casual. There will be opportunities to network, so look professional but dress comfortably.

4. Do I book my own transportation?
a. Yes, you must book your own transportation to and from the event. Do not book a flight prior to 5pm EST on Tuesday because meeting with congressional members run late into the afternoon.

5. Do I have to stay at the hotel?
   a. No you do not. Many people stay with friends and family that they know in the D.C. area. If you choose to not stay at the hotel, please plan accordingly to ensure you arrive at the hotel on time for the daily events.

6. Can I bring my significant other?
   a. Unfortunately, we have limited space, so no additional guests are allowed.

7. Do I have to be registered to vote?
   a. YES!! You must be a registered voter to participate in this event, since you will be meeting with congressional leaders from your voting district.

8. The event is on a Monday and Tuesday, what if I can’t miss class?
   a. We ask that when you register you make a commitment to attend and uphold that commitment. We do understand that circumstances may arise where you cannot attend. In those cases, please let Matt Holland or Jessica Squires know that you cannot attend as early as possible. If it is still early enough before the event, then we can try to find an alternate to take your spot.

9. I am the only person or the only (male/female) from my school going, how can I find a roommate?
   a. Jessica Squires (jmsquire@purdue.edu) and Matt Holland (mholnd3@illinois.edu) will be in charge of assisting people in finding roommates. Please email them if you are looking to share a room.