

Preface and Acknowledgments

It has been a special privilege to serve as the Chair of the One Health Initiative Task Force (OHITF). The concept of One Health is not new and perhaps has even enjoyed stronger endorsement and support in past decades prior to the advent of clinical specialization in human and veterinary medicine. Achieving the end point of One Health is truly one of the critical challenges facing humankind today.

The Task Force is acutely aware of the heroes of the past such as William Osler and Rudolf Virchow, the Father of Comparative Pathology. Even the seminal scientific work of both Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch demonstrated the importance of comparative medicine and biomedical research. Both were early practitioners of One Health and their findings represented enormous medical breakthroughs of the 19th century. We also remember the early efforts of Rachel Carson,¹ who raised an awakening of an entire generation to environmental issues, leading to an appreciation of the health of the environment as an integral component to the One Health concept.

Pioneers in this field include former Assistant Surgeon General James Steele, who epitomizes One Health. Dr. Steele organized and developed the first Veterinary Public Health program with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the 1940s, and was responsible for the official inclusion of veterinarians into the US Public Health Service, beginning in 1947. It was the groundbreaking work of Dr. Steele, partnering with physicians and other health professionals, which led to rapid advances in the control and prevention of zoonotic diseases both in the US and internationally.

However, for me personally, and for many members of the Task Force, we fondly remember the pioneering and visionary efforts of Dr. Calvin Schwabe. We were influenced and “converted” to One Health by Dr. Schwabe, who spent a lifetime practicing and teaching the principles of One Health. The Task Force members wish to honor Dr. Schwabe by dedicating this report to him.

Acknowledgments

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), and this Task Force in particular, have been well served by committed volunteers who give their time and energy to work on important issues to improve and advance the veterinary profession. The American Medical Association (AMA) and American Public Health Association (APHA), as well as other professional organizations, operate similarly and are also dependent on volunteers. I commend these dedicated professionals and salute them for their hard work and aspirations to make a difference in the lives of the people and animals that we serve.

I am especially appreciative and thank my fellow task force members. The OHITF members have added remarkable insights, wisdom, and intellect into this report and to our deliberations. The group has formed a strong camaraderie and has enthusiastically devoted themselves to the cause of One Health today and for the future.

In addition, the AVMA is fortunate to have a talented, energetic, and superb staff. The entire Task Force wishes to both acknowledge and thank Drs. Lynne White-Shim, Heather Case, Elizabeth Curry-Galvin, and Ms. Ellen Pietka, all of whom gave tirelessly to supporting our Task Force and this project. Other staff members, including Dr. Janis Audin, J.B. Hancock, and Sharon Curtis Granskog, have also added real value to our work. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Roger Mahr, who championed the One Health concept and greatly helped elevate it as part of the AVMA's agenda.

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“The challenges and obligations of health professionals have never been tested as we are today to truly reestablish our social responsibility.”



