



RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2 **APPROVED**

SOURCE: **USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY AND VETERINARY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

SUBJECT MATTER: **The federal classification standard for the Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) -0701 series should be updated to reflect the expanded skills and abilities of veterinarians**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

There is a current concern for a lack of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals to fill science and technology positions within federal service to support the progress and innovation of the United States government. Veterinarians, with their broad-based skills sets, can be utilized to address many of these current and future needs.

Veterinarians possess a wide variety of skills and training beyond strictly clinical veterinary medicine. These include utilizing a One Health approach to addressing animal, public and environment health, and experience and skills in advanced science, research, public health, broad-based agricultural/environmental knowledge, problem solving, business management, and communication. These skills can be utilized to address hiring needs within federal service in a broad array of science-associated fields including both technical and management arenas. However, the diverse skill set, critical thinking ability, and strong scientific background of veterinarians is often over-shadowed by the perception that veterinarians are only trained to treat animals, thus leading hiring authorities to under-value the skills and knowledge that veterinarians have to contribute and succeed in a variety of employment areas, and in some cases, preventing veterinarians from even being able to apply for relevant positions.

The current federal classification standard for a Veterinary Medical Officer (701 series) limits veterinarians to positions primarily related to animal health and veterinary medical science and does not recognize the additional professional skills that veterinarians obtain during their veterinary training. As a result, professionals with Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Medical Doctor (DVM/VMD) degrees are sometimes not considered to be qualified for other types of positions that require a background in the basic sciences, health, agriculture and/or environmental issues, although required veterinary training encompasses all of these subjects. The breadth of knowledge and insight that veterinarians have can contribute to a wide variety of technical fields and would be very valuable to the federal government.

The recognition of the skills offered by veterinarians has often not been considered when developing federal position descriptions, thus minimizing the likelihood of veterinarians applying for or being considered for a variety of positions for which they would be highly qualified. A veterinary medical officer is considered by some to not have many skills equivalent to those with Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees. In many cases, this is because the narrow scope of the 0701 series leads to the belief that veterinarians are only capable of performing a limited number of professional animal health related activities.

The federal classification standard for the Veterinary Medical Officer 0701 series should be expanded to include the additional skill sets that veterinarians possess as veterinarians are well trained to serve and excel in a variety of federal science, technology, and management positions.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Office of Personnel Management update the federal classification standard of the Veterinary Medical Officer 0701 series to incorporate the expanded skills and abilities of veterinarians beyond clinical veterinary medicine. For example, those skills and abilities should include problem solving, critical thinking, administrative and management skills. The classification should also reflect a veterinarian's understanding and ability to implement:

1. The One Health concept protecting human, animal, and environmental health;
2. Population medicine; and
3. Expertise in the arenas of zoonotic disease prevention and control, epidemiology, diagnostic medicine, and food safety and security.