michigan veterinary medical association

Professional excellence.
Compassionate care.

February 14, 2006

The Honorable Neal Nitz
The Honorable Edward Gaffney
State Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representatives Nitz and Gaffney,

The Michigan Veterinary Medical Association represents over 1,900 veterinarians in the state of Michigan. Our members have expertise in areas including companion animal medicine, food animal management, comparative public health, equine medicine, the avian industry and much more. Additionally, our public health veterinarians are critical to the safety of this state.

We are writing this letter to emphasize that veterinarians represent an important health segment within our state. With the rise of zoonotic diseases around the world, veterinarians need to be on the forefront of decision-making with regard to these issues. MVMA stands ready to assist in emergencies as needed and we encourage the State to include veterinarians in all emergency planning and avian influenza preparedness.

MVMA has an Emergency Preparedness Task Force that is working with various state and federal agencies to assist in organizing veterinarians when emergency situations arise. In recent years our task force has partnered with MDA, MSU College of Veterinary Medicine, MDCH, MSU Extension, USDA and private practitioners across the state. These partnerships resulted in the creation of Vet Net, a comprehensive education and training program geared toward the state's nearly 3,600 licensed veterinarians to enhance their awareness, preparedness and response to animal disease-related emergencies. Vet Net includes two main components: a general education series for all veterinarians and an in-depth emergency preparedness training program for those who sign up to serve in Veterinary Corps.

Veterinary Corps is a group of Michigan veterinarians willing to help state and federal agencies provide veterinary-related services to Michigan citizens and animals in the event of a large-scale animal health emergency. These veterinarians can perform a wide range of tasks related to animal and public health. They can be involved in planning and organizing activities, examining and handling animals, protecting the biosecurity of an area, or talking with animal owners about the disease at hand.

If MVMA can assist you in your efforts with avian influenza, our veterinarians stand ready to help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at belyea@michvma.org or (517) 347-4710.

Sincerely,

Karlene B. Belyea

Karlene B. Belyea, MBA
Executive Director

michigan veterinary medical association 2144 Commons Parkway, Okemos, MI 48864 517 347·4710 517 347·4666 www.michvma.org