

## The Role of Key Influential Veterinary Medical Entities

Veterinary medicine is influenced by a number of entities, some regulatory, some simply advancing the interest of veterinarians, but each with a specific task. This guide provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of key influential organizations. Three such organizations are listed in Figure 1. They impact diverse areas such as education, accreditation, and testing/licensure.

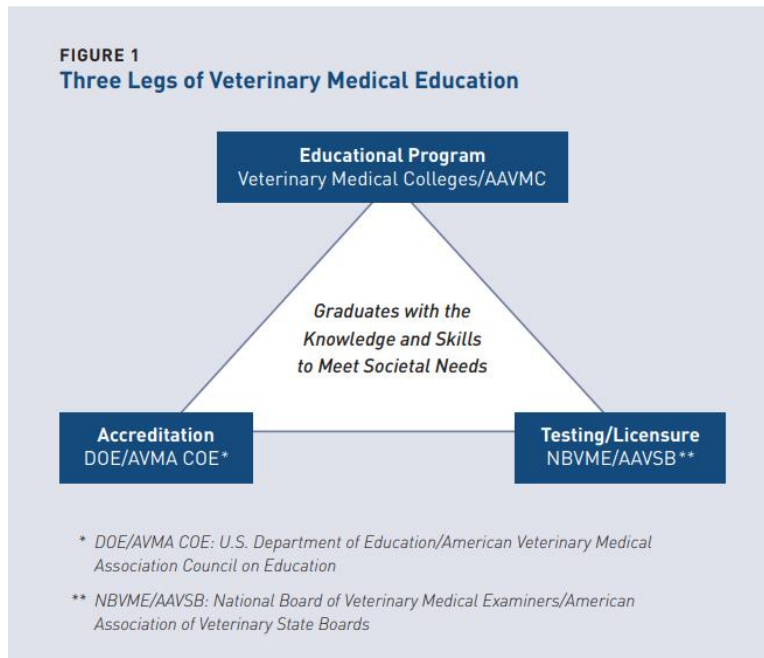


Figure 1 Interrelationship of organizations working to produce veterinary graduates with knowledge and skills to meet societal needs.

Source: [https://www.aavmc.org/assets/data-new/files/NAVMEC/navmec\\_roadmapreport\\_web\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.aavmc.org/assets/data-new/files/NAVMEC/navmec_roadmapreport_web_booklet.pdf)

In addition to the three key organizations mentioned in the figure above, there are additional entities that are influential in the practice of veterinary medicine: State Veterinary Boards, and Local and State Veterinary Medical Associations. More details about all of these organizational relationships are listed below.

1. **The [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)** (AVMA) represents more than 99,500 members and is the primary national veterinary association supporting veterinarians and advancing the profession. Its vision includes: "...protecting, promoting and advancing a strong, unified veterinary profession." While the AVMA does not have direct regulatory authority, it plays many significant roles in veterinary medicine:
  - A. The AVMA appoints eight members to the Council of Education, a program of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges, which is discussed below (item #5).
  - B. The AVMA publishes the [Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association](#) (JAVMA).
  - C. AVMA members enjoy a myriad of benefits, including [Professional Liability Insurance](#) specifically tailored to the needs of veterinarians.
  
2. **The [American Association of Veterinary State Boards](#)** (AAVSB) is the association of veterinary medicine regulatory boards. Its members include licensing bodies in 62 jurisdictions across the United States and nine Canadian provinces. The AAVSB's role is to support state and regional regulators by providing programs and services such as, but not limited to:
  - A. Continuing Education (CE) Services
  - B. Exam Services
  - C. Licensure Assistance
  - D. [Model Practice Acts](#)

### **Licensing Boards for Veterinary Medicine**

Licensing boards regulate veterinary medicine in their jurisdictions to protect the welfare of the public.

One of their tasks is ensuring those entering the practice of veterinary medicine meet a minimum standard of practice by being properly educated, qualified, and are fit to be licensed.

### 3. State Boards of Veterinary Medicine/Veterinary Examiners

State Boards of Veterinary Medicine regulate the practice of veterinary medicine within their jurisdictions. While they may be members of the AAVSB, each state has its own state board of veterinary medicine which is the licensing and regulatory agency for the practice of veterinary medicine in that state. The AAVSB provides [contact information](#) for veterinary and veterinary technician regulatory agencies, along with other allied groups on their website.

### 4. State and Local Veterinary Medical Associations

State Veterinary Medical Associations are membership organizations to support members by providing education, innovation, advocacy, and, most importantly, a helping hand. Many State VMAs offer CE programs consisting of the latest scientific and technological training in veterinary medicine for optimal professional development, which is required for license renewal. Many State VMAs are also involved with legislative advocacy, ensuring that veterinary interests are considered in the myriad of bills introduced in their state.

Throughout the country, there exist local veterinary associations to provide the opportunity for high quality continuing education and for synergistic networking among colleagues to enhance the standard of care provided in their local area. Similar to state associations, some of these local associations are active in political advocacy, particularly with issues that affect animal health and welfare locally.

The AVMA supports and encourages both state and local veterinary associations, but it is important to note that these state and local organizations are autonomous and not under the AVMA's umbrella.

### 5. The [American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges](#)

(AAVMC) represents the global academic veterinary medical community. A key role of the AAVMC is the [accreditation](#) of colleges and schools of veterinary medicine via the Council on Education.

The Council on Education is jointly supported by the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The AAVMC is responsible for appointing eight of the 20 members of the COE and provides the funding to support these eight members. The AVMA appoints and funds eight members as well. The remaining four members are the three public members and the Canadian representative, who are selected by the COE and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, respectively.

#### Council on Education

The [Council on Education \(COE\)](#) is the U.S. Department of Education approved accrediting agency for colleges and schools of veterinary medicine in the United States, Canada, and international institutions seeking accreditation by the agency.

In order to become an AAVMC member institution, a college or school of veterinary medicine must earn accreditation from the COE.

### In Summary

Veterinary medicine is a diverse profession offering practitioners virtually endless opportunities and avenues to work within the profession. There are many other professional organizations that support, and advocate for, veterinarians in the practice of veterinary medicine. Some involve species, such as the American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Association of Feline Practitioners, and the American Animal Hospital Association, to name a few. Some involve disciplines, such as the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, and the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. The organizations listed in this report are the ones most closely associated with the education, accreditation, and licensing of practicing veterinarians in the United States. Some of the aforementioned organizations have a regulatory function, and others are strictly advocacy oriented. Regardless, they can all be resources in efforts to change certain aspects of how veterinary medicine is regulated and practiced in the United States.