

American Medical Association (AMA) President and Leading Florida Department of Health (USA) Officials Discuss One Health at North American Veterinary Conference – January 17, 2011 – Posted One Health Initiative website Tuesday, January 25, 2011

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The physician President of the American Medical Association (AMA), **Cecil B. Wilson, MD**, a strong One Health advocate, and three prominent One Health leaders from the Florida Department of Health (USA) gave insightful and inspiring presentations at the recent North American Veterinary Conference (NAVC) evening One Health panel session in Orlando, Florida on January 17, 2011. A brief Q & A period after the presentations yielded cogent and useful explanations for various One Health items of interest and queries from the audience.

Dr. Wilson reasserted the AMA's strong support for the One Health concept before a group of veterinarians at a meeting aimed primarily at private practitioners of veterinary medicine. Wilson was very positive about the need for interdisciplinary collaborations and communications between physicians and veterinarians. He pointed out the historic passage of a "One Health" resolution at the AMA's 2007 meeting in Chicago. Wilson noted that "the American Medical Association provided a \$50,000 contribution to further the establishment of a National One Health Commission [<http://www.onehealthcommission.org/>]. Physician **Dr. Albert J. Osbahr, III** admirably represents AMA as Chair of the One Health Commission Board of Directors." The AMA President had recently reaffirmed AMA's and his support of One Health with the following August 30, 2010 statement provided to and posted by the One Health Initiative website:

"The AMA strongly supports the *One Health Initiative*, the collaborative effort of multiple disciplines to attain optimal health for humans, animals, and our environment. More than 60 percent of human infectious diseases and the preponderance of emerging infectious diseases have an animal vector [reservoir]. Better collaboration is needed between human and veterinary medicine to protect the public health. The *One Health Initiative* is playing an important role in achieving this goal."

The physician director of the Orange County [FL] Health Department and past President of the American Association of Public Health Physicians, **Kevin M. Sherin, MD, MPH**, actively participated. Dr. Sherin said, "The One Health Website [www.onehealthinitiative.com] helps all the professions to understand our need for collaboration in training, research and practice. Growing appreciation for the connections of diseases between animals, people and plants can help build healthier, sustainable communities and a healthy planet."

The two veterinarians were **Carina Blackmore, DVM, PhD**, Florida's state public health veterinarian and **Lisa A. Conti, DVM, MPH**, Director of the Florida department of health's environmental health division.

Dr. Blackmore said, "Community leaders from different, complementary backgrounds can better solve community problems both on the local and global scale. All environmental and health practitioners have something to contribute and should consider contributing. Issues of importance for sustainable communities range from practice to policy and include making sure people don't release pets in the wild and are able to remain with their pets after natural disasters to food security and climate change."

Dr. Conti focused her remarks about how One Health was an integral part of approaching environmental and ecologic health concerns. She concluded by saying, "Every day, our natural and built environment impact our health. The built environment includes how we plan our communities. Decades of living in communities that are not conducive to pedestrian transportation have contributed to obesity in both people and pets."

One member of the audience, a veterinarian and long time One Health supporter/advocate, observed, "The day's One Health meeting prior to this evening panel session was good. The speakers, all veterinarians, discussed various interesting aspects of the concept. But this four-member panel of two MDs and two DVMs—all obviously dedicated to the principles of One Health—demonstrated its true essence. They melded together in perfect harmony. Their brief comments were right on and their answers to questions were succinct and knowledgeable." From my point of view, he said, "It was a co-equal, respectful display of interdisciplinary communications and collaboration, in the true spirit of One Health ... as it should be. The AMA President and these public health folks really do 'get it'! We need much more of this."

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Note: Drs. Kevin M. Sherin, Lisa A. Conti and Carina Blackmore serve on the **One Health Initiative autonomous pro bono team's Honorary Advisory Board** <http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/advBoard.php>.