

Promote interdisciplinary continuing education opportunities among health professionals.

Dr. Sophia A. Ramlal, JP

Chairman – Continuing Education Accreditation Committee

Jamaica Veterinary Board



The One Health Initiative aims to optimize health for people, animals and the environment, through collaborative efforts of multidisciplinary health professionals globally. For this collaboration to work effectively, each discipline must demonstrate appropriate expertise supportive of the accomplishment of the global goal, in ways that are scientifically sound and contemporary. Health professionals are therefore charged to be on the cutting edge through a structured process of lifelong learning

and certification.

Decidedly, currency of expertise is an established standard across health disciplines, with many international jurisdictions mandating on-going professional development as a condition of licensure. Regulators of Jamaican health professionals have adopted Continuing Education (CE) as a professional development standard as evidenced by the requirements as follows: Veterinarians: 10 credits annually; Medical Doctors: 20 hours annually; Dentists: 40 hours biennially; Nurses, Midwives and Enrolled Assistant Nurses: 30 hours biennially. Indeed best practices dictate that health professionals never stop learning!

With continuing education being a common standard across health disciplines, the platform is set to actively promote nexus and learning in areas of common interest. While conduct involving ethical standards in patient care, record-keeping and disclosure restrictions are established practice areas where similarities span the gamut of health professionals, individual health disciplines should seek to promote, through their respective continuing education offerings, learning opportunities which integrate not just these areas, but others such as zoonoses and public health management, human-animal bonding therapy, multi-species medical management in natural disaster responses etc.

Historically, a blinkered approach has been the norm in topic selection for continuing education events: vets discuss animal health, physicians talk about human health etc. The One Health approach requires removing these blinkers and widening the

Promote interdisciplinary continuing education opportunities among health professionals.

scope of learning and teaching. Structuring continuing education activities to appeal to a wide cross section of health professionals makes scientific and economic sense as it facilitates wider discussion and patronization. Coupled with this should be a mutual system of accreditation and /or acceptance of CE credits awarded by extra-disciplinary accreditors.

While legislative mandates limit practice to areas of licensure, inter-disciplinary CE discussions facilitate integrated learning which ultimately redound to the benefit of all patients, human and animal and to the overall health status of communities. Re-emerging zoonoses, reverse zoonoses and bioterrorism threats should remind all health professionals that species impact each other negatively. Conversely, service animals, hippotherapy and food production etc should remind of the positive interspecies impacts. Learning together how **all** these impacts combine to affect **all** involved should be a goal of professional development for **all** health professionals as we collaborate to support the ONE HEALTH INITIATIVE.



A multi-disciplinary audience at the first Jamaican One Health Symposium, May 1, 2016

Promote interdisciplinary continuing education opportunities among health professionals.
