



**Bridging Sectors with a One Health
Approach: The Role of Veterinarians in
Disease Prevention and Control
Call to Action**



Endorsed by the IVSA Standing Committee on One Health



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Bridging Sectors with a One Health Approach: The Role of Veterinarians in Disease Prevention and Control

Call to Action

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Introduction

Veterinarians play a pivotal role in protecting global health by preventing, detecting, and responding to zoonotic and infectious diseases, threats that cross species barriers, disrupt ecosystems, and pose significant risks to both public health and socio-economic stability.

In light of these escalating challenges, the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) Pathology Network (PN) issues this Call to Action to accelerate implementation of a robust One Health Approach (OHA), a collaborative, multisectoral framework that recognises the intrinsic connection between human, animal, and environmental health [1].

This proposal builds upon the foundation laid by a previously published IVSA policy paper, developed by the PN, with contributions of the Standing Committee on One Health (SCOH), and endorsed by the World Veterinary Association (WVA) and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE). While that paper established shared priorities, this document was issued solely by the IVSA Pathology Network to push for immediate, actionable steps across sectors [1-3].

The International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) is a global non-profit and non-governmental organisation dedicated to uniting veterinary students worldwide. It is the largest veterinary student organisation in the world, with 190 member organisations across 84 countries and approximately 38,000 members. The IVSA's mission is to: "*Benefit the animals and people of the world by harnessing the potential and dedication of veterinary students to promote the international application of veterinary skills, education, and knowledge*" [4].

The IVSA Pathology Network (PN) is the IVSA's latest Network and serves as a platform dedicated to veterinary students who are enthusiastic about veterinary pathology, complementing the global network of IVSA members. By facilitating collaborations with specialists, the PN aims to present the diverse interdisciplinary aspects of veterinary pathology and enhance significant youth engagement in this field, fostering a strong connection between veterinarians. In doing so, the PN actively contributes to the IVSA's diversity by introducing the first Network focused on the paraclinical field of Veterinary Medicine. The IVSA Pathology Network aims to raise awareness about Veterinary Pathology and help veterinary students explore potential career paths. The PN does so by connecting like-minded IVSA members and providing collaboration and knowledge exchange opportunities [5].

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The following key recommendations, first introduced in the original policy paper, remain central to advancing the One Health Approach and form the foundation upon which this Call to Action is built [1]:

1. Enhancing veterinary education:

Equip veterinarians with advanced epidemiological and biosecurity skills to enable effective disease prevention and control.

2. Fostering interdisciplinary collaboration:

Strengthen partnerships across medical, veterinary, and environmental health sectors for comprehensive surveillance and rapid responses to outbreaks.

3. Investing in global health infrastructure:

Support biosecurity, surveillance systems, and emergency preparedness to mitigate the health crises and their economic impacts.

4. Promoting public awareness:

Educate communities on zoonotic risks and the veterinarians' role in ensuring safe food systems and public health.

5. Implementing One Health frameworks:

Encourage governments and institutions to adopt and integrate strategies like the Berlin Principles and the COHFE Framework, aligning policy with the interconnected health needs of society.

The PN reaffirms the original policy's key recommendations and urges targeted action by stakeholders across academia, government, industry, and civil society to bring these priorities to life. Veterinarians are already leading many of these efforts, but broader, faster, and better coordinated action is needed. This Call to Action outlines how key stakeholders must now translate these recommendations into meaningful, sustained progress [1-3].



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Call to Action

To move from intention to impact, collective and coordinated action is essential. The IVSA Pathology Network calls for immediate steps by all sectors, governments, academia, international organisations, and veterinary professionals, to operationalise the One Health recommendations outlined above. These actions are not optional; they are necessary to prevent future health crises, protect food systems, and strengthen global resilience [1-3].

To address the currently faced global health challenges, the IVSA calls on all stakeholders to play an active role:

1. **Governments and policymakers** must prioritise the integration of veterinarians into national and international health strategies, ensuring their active involvement in One Health initiatives and policy development. This is crucial for addressing zoonotic diseases, improving food safety, and safeguarding both human and animal health.
2. **Academic and training institutions** must modernise veterinary curricula and strengthen core competencies in areas such as epidemiology, biosecurity, and cross-sector collaboration to meet the evolving demands of global health. While systemic curriculum reform is a long-term goal, meaningful progress can begin through greater inter-institutional cooperation. Developing shared learning modules, expanding access to online training, and integrating interdisciplinary content into existing programmes offer practical, scalable ways to enhance veterinary education in the short term.
3. **Veterinary professionals** are urged to advocate for the adoption of One Health frameworks within their practices and to foster collaborations with medical and environmental experts, recognising the interconnected nature of global health challenges. Practical steps could include engaging interdisciplinary training, participating in community outreach, or contributing to informal knowledge exchange. Even small, consistent efforts to integrate cross-sectoral thinking into daily practice could help build momentum toward more coordinated and effective responses to shared health threats.
4. **International organisations** - including, but not limited to, entities such as the World Health Organization (WHO), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - are called to provide resources and platforms that support cross-sector partnerships. By facilitating knowledge-sharing between veterinarians, public health experts, human healthcare professionals, and environmental scientists, these organisations play a crucial role in enhancing collective responses to health crises.
5. **Communities and civil society** are encouraged to recognise the critical role of veterinarians in ensuring public health and food safety and to support efforts to raise awareness of zoonotic risks.

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The unique expertise of veterinarians positions them as key actors in bridging sectors, reducing the burden of infectious diseases, and advancing global health security. A shared commitment to strengthening veterinary capacity and fostering cross-sector collaboration is essential. These efforts will not only support current health systems but also build a foundation for a healthier, safer, and more sustainable future [1-3].

Conclusion

Veterinarians stand at the frontlines of disease prevention and control, uniquely equipped to bridge the gaps between human, animal, and environmental health. This Call to Action reaffirms the International Veterinary Students' Association's commitment, through the IVSA Pathology Network, to advancing a unified One Health Approach, built on collaboration, education, and shared responsibility. The recommendations outlined provide a roadmap for strengthening the veterinary profession's capacity to address pressing global health challenges [1-3].

These recommendations include:

1. **Enhancing** veterinary education;
2. **Fostering** interdisciplinary collaboration;
3. **Investing** in global health infrastructure;
4. **Promoting** public awareness;
5. **Implementing** One Health frameworks.

The endorsement of these initiatives by esteemed organisations like the World Veterinary Association and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe highlights their alignment with global health priorities. By investing in veterinary expertise and uniting stakeholders around a shared vision, we can mitigate zoonotic risks, enhance food safety, and build resilient health systems capable of withstanding future threats [1-3].

Looking ahead, this document serves not only as a policy proposal, but as a rallying call for governments, institutions, professionals, and communities to champion the role of veterinarians in safeguarding public and planetary health. Strategic investment in veterinary capacity and sustained cross-sector collaboration are essential to building a future that is healthier, more resilient, and better prepared to address emerging health challenges [1-3].

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Resources

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