

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Saturday, July 14 and Sunday July, 15, Boston Marriott Copley Place, 617-236-5800

### **FIRM COMMISSIONED TO IDENTIFY COMPETENCIES LEADING TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS**

(Boston, Mass. July 15, 2001) -- To help improve the veterinary profession's economic health, Personnel Decisions International (PDI), has been hired by a consortium of veterinary colleges, with support from Bayer Animal Health, to identify the competencies that contribute to success in the veterinary profession.

According to the KPMG study released in May 1999, stagnant real income is the most significant problem facing veterinarians. Veterinarian's income seriously lags behind that of similar professionals. The low income impacts the ability to repay student loans and could interfere with a veterinarian's ability to become a practice owner. The KPMG study suggested that many veterinarians might lack the skills, knowledge, attitude and aptitudes that result in economic success.

While skills, knowledge and experiences can be provided in veterinary school, attitudes and aptitudes are much more difficult to develop within a four-year time frame or to develop in practice, according to Jeffrey Klausner, DVM, dean, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine and chair of the project's steering committee. "Veterinary schools can help the long-term viability of the profession by considering these traits in the selection process," he says.

Klausner sites the ability to do several things at once, often called multitasking, as an example of a somewhat inherent trait that is probably necessary for success in small animal practice but would be difficult to teach in school.

"PDI's behavioral psychologists have tremendous experience in identifying basic competencies associated with professional success and then developing quantitative methods to identify people with those competencies," says Klausner.

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The National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues (NCVEI), which was formed to address the major findings from the KPMG Study and has five working groups focusing on critical KPMG issues, will use the PDI findings. “The NCVEI working group on Skills, Knowledge and Aptitudes (SKA) has been meeting across the country to begin identifying the skills, knowledge and aptitudes veterinarians need to be successful and to devise strategies to develop or select for them,” says Lonnie King, DVM, dean, Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine and chair of the SKA working group. “The PDI project will verify our early findings and, for the first time, provide the profession with empirical evidence to define core competencies of successful veterinarians.”

The steering committee for the PDI project met on Sunday, July 15 during the AVMA convention to kick off the project and finalize the plan of action. During the course of the next year, PDI will conduct focus groups to collect data from the sample population of successful veterinarians. They will conduct multiple focus group surveys at enough sites to ensure representation of all major career paths. Using well-established interview techniques, the interviewers will collect the information needed to identify the key, behaviorally specific competencies that are common to the individuals interviewed. The data will then be compiled and analyzed. A final outcome of the project will be recommendations for effective ways to build desired competencies in the profession.

Bayer Animal Health has contributed \$50,000 toward the cost of the \$110,000 project. The consortium members will split the remaining costs. Consortium members are Iowa State University, Michigan State University, The Ohio State University, Oklahoma State University, Purdue University, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Minnesota, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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NOTE TO REPORTERS: Dr. Klausner is available for interviews during the AVMA convention. He can be reached at the Hilton Boston Back Bay Hotel at 617-236-1100.