

**Reconsidering the Role of Veterinary Medical Education in Public health****Presenter:** Philip Kass, University of California, Davis**Session:** Oral**Date/Time:** Monday, April 23; 2-3PM

There is a pressing national need for veterinarians to fulfill the role of public health professionals in the years to come, and to manage diseases in animal populations that can have profound health and economic consequences in both animal and human populations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects there to be 28,000 job openings in the veterinary medical profession by 2012 due to growth and net replacements, a turnover of nearly 38 percent. The nation's veterinary medical colleges do not have the capacity to satisfy the current and future demand for veterinarians and veterinary expertise that is vital to maintain public health preparedness. Most incoming and graduating veterinarians want to be practitioners; few graduating veterinarians intend to go into careers in veterinary public practice or health. It is unrealistic to think that we can solve the problem of a shortage in this field by changing the mind-set of veterinary medical students, or by changing our admissions policies. We, therefore, need to change the mind-set of faculty and reconsider our educational priorities and goals. Is it really necessary, for example, for veterinary public health practitioners to be trained to be clinical practitioners as well? Reconsideration of public health practitioner objectives will entail offering an alternative degree pathway to be proposed that comes with the recognition that public health paradigms for veterinarians that work in other countries will no longer be successful in the United States.

**Biography:**

Philip Kass received his DVM from the University of California, Davis in 1983, followed by an MPVM degree in 1984, a MS in Statistics in 1988, and a PhD in epidemiology in 1990. His post-doctoral work was in environmental epidemiology at the UCLA School of Public Health. He is currently a professor of epidemiology at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and School of Medicine, where he teaches courses in epidemiologic methods and biostatistics. His research work is focused on companion animal epidemiology.

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