

IAVMA Code of Professional Conduct

IAVMA has adopted the following Code of Professional Conduct applicable to all members (“Members”) of the organization, all members of Board of Directors and all officers of the Board or of any appointed Committees (each, and in this document here, called “**Members**”), who all agree by signing below:

1. Professionalism

All conduct of all Members of IAVMA must be consistent with, and acceptable in, a professional environment. The Members and all people with whom Members interact with when representing IAVMA, are to be treated with respect and courtesy. In general, the Member is expected to use good judgment, based on high ethical principles, as a guide to acceptable conduct. Compliance with this code of conduct is the responsibility of every Member. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of conduct could lead to disciplinary action, including possible removal from the Board, and, if and as applicable from membership in the organization.

2. Demonstrating and Promoting Ethical Conduct

All Members are expected to conduct themselves ethically, i.e., by demonstrating honesty, integrity, fairness, respect and professionalism toward all matters and persons. No Member shall provide inaccurate, false or fraudulent information in the course of conducting business. No Member shall make bad faith allegations of wrongdoing, including allegations that are knowingly false, capricious, maliciously motivated or made with reckless disregard for fact. Members are expected to maintain the dignity of the Veterinary profession in general and of IAVMA, its premier representative in particular. Members are expected to maintain and enhance the core values of the Veterinary values of compassion and empathy for all sentient beings, human or animal. Such values may evolve and may be further edited and appended by the IAVMA through its membership and Board.

3. Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment

IAVMA strives to maintain a workplace, professional ambiance and atmosphere in its events and venues that is free from illegal discrimination and harassment. While all forms of harassment are prohibited, it is the organization’s policy to emphasize that sexual harassment is specifically prohibited. Any Member who engages in discriminatory or harassing conduct towards other Members or families or other third-parties is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the Board or membership and the Board shall not be limited in exercising any further legal action as may be lawful and advised by counsel. Complaints alleging misconduct on the part of Members will be investigated promptly, as confidentially as possible by the person they are reported to and any others they choose to include in the investigation. IAVMA has a zero-tolerance policy for any such unlawful or unethical conduct.

4. Confidentiality

Members are reminded that confidential financial, personnel and other matters concerning the organization, donors, staff or clients/consumers may be included in Board materials or discussed from time to time. Members shall not disclose such confidential information to anyone.

5. Active Participation

Members in general and Board members in particular are expected to exercise the duties and responsibilities of their elected, appointed positions (as in the case of Board Committees) or other positions with integrity, collegiality, and care. This includes:

- Making attendance at all meetings of the board a high priority.
- Being prepared to discuss the issues and business on the agenda, and having read all background material relevant to the topics at hand.
- Cooperating with and respecting the opinions of fellow Board members, and leaving personal prejudices out of all board discussions, as well as supporting actions of the Board even when the Board member personally did not support the action taken.
- Putting the interests of the organization above personal interests.
- Representing the organization in a positive and supportive manner at all times and in all places.
- Showing respect and courteous conduct in all Board and committee meetings and to all Members in general and their partners/spouses and families, whether in writing, verbally or on social media in any format. Each act actually matters in maintaining the dignity of IAVMA and your chosen profession. Our next generation of Veterinarians and student are looking up to each Member as an example of leadership.
- Refraining from intruding on administrative issues that are the responsibility of management, except to monitor the results and ensure that procedures are consistent with board policy.
- Observing established lines of communication and directing requests for information or assistance to the elected or appointed members of the Board.

6. Disciplinary Process.

The Board has approved the following general process for investigating possible infraction or violations of Bylaws or policies of IAVMA. Following is a disciplinary process for any breaches of the above Codes of Professional Conduct, any rules of IAVMA, either in the Bylaws or in other policies, as agreed to by all the Members upon enrollment in the organization.

The Board or its appointed Committees may amend, edit, or waive any related terms in the following or in any other policies of IAVMA in its sole discretion. The Members hereby give

such authority to the Board to implement such in the field in the future as needed from time-to-time.

IAVMA and each Members agree that the following disciplinary process shall be adhered to in sequence, by both parties, after exhausting each preceding step to the fullest in good faith, from Step A to Step F: {Initials_____}

Step A. Fact Finding. The Board, or its appointed investigating officer or Committee of the Board, shall initially establish a process of preliminary fact finding concerning a complaint, or a possible infraction of IAVMA's policies or a complaint about a Member's conduct or behavior.

Step B. First Opportunity to Respond given to Member. The investigating person or authority or selected third-party or vendor (as a representative of the Board of IAVMA) shall report back to the Board or the executive Committee, the discovered preliminary facts. The executive committee shall appoint an individual to collate such facts and present such facts (after redacting confidential evidence for any other legal reason, in the sole opinion of IAVMA's legal counsel) to the possible infracting Member alleged to have done such conduct.

Step C. Provide verbal feedback to the alleged infracting Member. After receiving feedback from Step B above, The Board or Committee of the Board shall appoint an individual to share the facts and perspective of the Board to provide feedback to the Member and make an earnest attempt to close the gap in perspectives, expectations and expected behaviors and conduct from the Member and membership in IAVMA.

Step D. Provide Written feedback or warning. The Board reserves all its rights, with or without the advice of legal counsel, to provide written feedback or a warning to correct any noticed infractions by any Member in its Bylaws or written policies.

Step D. The Parties shall Attempt Mediation between to resolve the dispute. If the parties have not been able to resolve or settle the disputed matter, the parties agree to mediate any disputes. Such mediation will be by a mutually selected mediator who shall be a retired judge in Alameda County, CA. All related costs shall be paid for equally by both parties as the costs are incurred and shall be paid immediately.

Step E. The Parties Agree to Binding Arbitration. The parties agree to arbitrate any dispute, by a retired judge experienced in such arbitration matters, in Alameda County, CA. The prevailing party in such a binding decision by the arbitrator shall recover all reasonable costs and attorney fees from the other party, including any collection costs.

Step F. Removal from Membership. Depending on the facts and circumstances, the Board may, at its sole discretion, in good faith, may remove any member for any serious breach of Professional Conduct at any time though the above process. {Initials_____}

I, _____, recognizing the important responsibility I am undertaking in serving as a Member of IAVMA, hereby pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner the duties and obligations associated with my role as a Member and abide by this Code of Professional Conduct. I understand that failure to abide by this Code of Professional Conduct may result in my removal as a Member, pursuant to the requirements and processes provided in the organization's governing documents or above processes and disclosures.

Signature_____

Date_____