



VETERINARY  
MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION  
EXECUTIVES



*THRIVE:* Enhancing Wellbeing Through Truth Bombs, Training, and MemberShares

Monday & Tuesday | July 19-20, 2021 | 1-6 PM Daily EDT

**VMAE | Virtual Summer Conference 2021**



## Program Overview

The wellbeing of veterinary professionals, including veterinary medical association executives, has been under even greater pressure as a result of the public health pandemic. Helping individuals and teams thrive despite such pressure requires resilience, resources, and education. That's precisely why the summer conference is focused on advancing personal and professional wellbeing.

VMA executives occupy unique positions in organized veterinary medicine – positions with broad reach, with communication channels at the ready to amplify messaging, and with the opportunity to influence others. The better educated that VMA executives are about wellbeing the more helpful they can be in advancing wellbeing – their own, their members, and their teams.

The conference will be held virtually from 1-6 PM Eastern time on July 19-20. **THRIVE** conference participants will learn how they and their members can become trained as wellbeing educators through a new program AVMA is launching. Participants will also gain familiarity with the expanding array of resources now available to support wellbeing – plus a session on Wellbeing Truth Bombs will sensitively yet candidly probe issues such as dealing with emotional blackmail and breaking the disastrous cycle of messaging related to death by suicide.

The conference also features MemberShare sessions with peer presenters whose insights and expertise will illuminate these topics:

- Supporting Wellbeing through Member and Employee Assistance Programs (MAP/EAP)
- Delivering the Most Relevant and Valuable Wellbeing Resources
- Changing Behavior: Results of the Power of Ten Impact Assessment Research Project
- Advancing DEI with the VMAE *Journey* Guide

Summer conference isn't complete without the annual meeting of members, where VMAE leaders will provide updates on association activities and where the new Board of Directors will be installed. The awards celebration will introduce the newest cohort of colleagues who will be recognized for their excellence in leadership and service – and congratulated by their peers with a virtual toast. The program also features a very special *aperitivo* hour (complete with a pre-meeting delivery of exceptional treats) conducted by a famous food writer who will host us from her home in Italy!

Join your colleagues to learn, to connect, and to engage in advancing wellbeing throughout the veterinary professions so we all can **THRIVE!**



All times listed are Eastern time		Day 1 JULY 19   MON	Day 2 JULY 20   TUES
1 PM	Summer Conference		VMAE Annual Member Meeting
2 PM			Summer Conference
3 PM			
4 PM			
5 PM	Social Hour   <i>Aperitivo</i> with Katie Parla!		Social Hour   Awards Celebration

## Networking Opportunities

*Complimentary with registration — Indicate your participation on the registration form*

### **Aperitivo with Katie Parla! - Monday**



Transport yourself to Italy with an aperitivo session led by cookbook author and food and drinks writer Katie Parla! Cocktails have hit their resurgence internationally and one only has to think about classic ingredients like vermouth and Campari to remember that Italy has strong ties to the cocktail industry. During this aperitivo (Italian happy hour) we will get a crash course in the history and personalities that have driven Italian cocktail culture for the past century and a half, discover ancient recipes, and mix national classics. We'll hit classics, such as the Negroni and the Milano-Torino not to mention the global phenomenon that is the Aperol Spritz while also making room for modern classics like the Paper Plane.


In typical Italian fashion, drinks will be paired with snacks, brought to you by Tasty Ribbon. Katie will also propose an Italy-inspired mocktail, equally in line with Italian culture (fun fact: 1 in 5 Italians don't drink!).

### **Awards Celebration - Tuesday**

Join us at the annual VMAE Awards Program to celebrate the accomplishment of individuals and organizations nominated to receive VMAE awards for Executive of the Year, Distinguished Service, and Best in the Business! Bring your favorite beverage for the toast to award recipients.



## Monday, July 19

1:00 - 1:15 PM	<b>Welcome</b>	Join President Susan Blevins as she welcomes you and your VMAE colleagues and sets the stage for <i>THRIVE</i> . You'll want to be logged in from the very first second because a special guest (OK, think Broadway star!) will surprise and delight you as we begin exploring the dimensions of wellbeing.
1:15 - 3:45 PM	<b>Wellbeing Education: It Takes a Village</b>	A trio of effective, creative and committed professionals – Drs. Jen Brandt, Marci Kirk, and Joseph Hahn – will provide an update on the latest wellbeing resources available and provide context for why these resources are so critical to all veterinary professionals. A brand-new module will be shared during this session. This is an exclusive “sneak peek” at an all new training opportunity developed by AVMA (with the support of Merck Animal Health) for veterinary professionals including VMA executives, which is set to launch later this year. Participants will also learn about AVMA resources (including AVMA.org, MyVeterinaryLife.com, Wellbeing Certificate Program, Brave Space Certificate Program, plus the Wellbeing Educator program) that support personal and professional wellbeing.
3:45 - 5:00 PM	<b>Wellbeing Truth Bombs</b>	To dispel wellbeing myths, misperceptions, and misunderstandings, truth is essential – and in this session Dr. Jen Brandt will speak truth about topics where VMA executives can be informed influencers. Topics include addressing emotional blackmail, breaking the disastrous cycle of messaging about death by suicide, taking an upstream approach to wellbeing, and fostering civility in the workplace. Participants will engage in small group discussions to think together about the implication, application, and impact of these truths.
5:00 - 6:00 PM	<b>Aperitivo with Katie Parla!</b> 	Join your colleagues for a virtual <i>Aperitivo</i> with Katie Parla, featured in Stanley Tucci's <i>Searching for Italy</i> TV series. Katie will give us a crash course in the history and personalities that have driven Italian cocktail culture for the past century and a half, discover ancient recipes, and mix national classics.  Registered attendees will receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipes for the Italian drinks Katie will guide us through</li> <li>• Gourmet Italian food gift box from Tasty Ribbon (must register by 6/30)</li> </ul>

## Tuesday, July 20

1:00 - 2:00 PM	<b>Annual Member Meeting</b>	Think of this as a lunch 'n learn! Bring your lunch and join your colleagues as we toast the many new members of our community and hear updates from President Susan Blevins, Treasurer Tim Atkinson, and CEO Ralph Johnson. Results of the Board of Directors election will be announced, the new board installed, and the president's gavel transferred to Dr. Randy Wheeler. Informative, yes – fun, yes – and a surprise or two, count on it!
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## Tuesday, July 20 Continued

2:00 - 2:45 PM	<b>Supporting Wellbeing through Member and Employee Assistance Programs (MAP/EAP)</b>	VMAE members Tim Atkinson (New York State VMS), Susan Blevins (Georgia VMA) and Christine Shupe, CAE (Veterinary Hospital Managers Association) will share their insights about Member Assistance Programs (MAPs) and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). They'll discuss how they defined the type of services that members would value, how they identified the best provider "fit" for their associations, how they decided on their particular pricing model, what level of member utilization has materialized, and more!
2:45 - 3:00 PM	<b>Delivering the Most Relevant and Valuable Wellbeing Resources</b>	VMAE's recently formed Wellbeing Committee focused its initial activity on discovery – through a survey of VMAE members to develop a better understanding of current efforts by VMAs in supporting the wellbeing of veterinary professionals. Eric Boehm, CAE, PMP, MNM, who chairs the Wellbeing Committee, will share results of the member survey and how the results will shape the committee's curation and creation of resources for VMAE members.
3:00 - 3:10 PM	<b>Break</b>	
3:10 - 4:00 PM	<b>Changing Behavior: Results of the Power of Ten Impact Assessment Research Project</b>	Join Lisa Perius (Indiana VMA) and James Lloyd, DVM, PhD (Animal Health Economics, LLC) as they discuss how Power of Ten programs are impacting participants. Lisa chairs the VMAE Power of Ten Committee and will update members about program developments, including newly created materials for use by VMAs to articulate the value proposition statement for P10 participation. Dr. Lloyd will present results of the survey completed by 335 program participants and what they told us about impacts on their lives and influences on their behaviors – which all connects to wellbeing in the larger context. Thanks to Elanco Animal Health for a grant to fund the research initiative.
4:00 - 4:50 PM	<b>Advancing DEI with the VMAE Journey Guide</b>	Candace Joy (Washington State VMA) and Kim D'Abreu (Diversity Dimensions Consulting LLC) as they unveil a significant new resource – <i>Journey: A guide for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in veterinary medicine</i> . The guide has been developed by VMAE's DEI Committee, where Candace serves as chair and Kim as consultant, to aid VMA executives and elected leaders in moving through four key stages of the DEI journey: Embracing the Case for Change, Deepening Our Education, Making the Commitment, and Focusing Our Actions. <i>Journey</i> is meant to inspire you and to provide the tools you and your VMA need to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
4:50 - 5:00 PM	<b>Break</b>	
5:00 - 6:00 PM	<b>Awards Celebration</b>	Join us at the annual VMAE Awards Program to celebrate the accomplishment of individuals and organizations nominated to receive VMAE awards for Executive of the Year, Distinguished Service, and Best in the Business! Bring your favorite beverage for the toast to award recipients.

## Session Leaders



**Jen Brandt, PhD, MSW**

Director of Member Wellbeing & Diversity Initiatives  
American Veterinary Medical Association

Creating robust and thriving work cultures requires that we recognize individuals as part of multiple, overlapping systems rather than as separate from the teams, organizations, and communities in which they operate. In other words, no amount of healthy eating, mindfulness, or exercise alone will fix a toxic, disengaged work environment, and no healthy work environment can completely offset suboptimal individual choices and behaviors. As Director of

Wellbeing, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives, Dr. Brandt guides healthcare professionals to maximize individual and organizational wellbeing by integrating macro and micro strategies, identifying what's working well, and applying solution-focused approaches. Her education and outreach efforts focus on removing barriers to wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, eliminating toxic work cultures, promoting workplace civility, increasing self-awareness and self-efficacy, transforming conflict effectively, and enhancing team communication.

Dr. Brandt is a licensed independent social worker and supervisor, experienced grief and trauma therapist, and healthcare team communications specialist. In 1997, Dr. Brandt founded The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine's Honoring the Bond Program, one of the first programs in the nation aimed at recognizing and supporting the human-animal bond by providing education and resources to animal owners and animal care professionals. She also co-founded the Association of American Veterinary College's Veterinary Mental Health Professional's Group, which serves to enhance and build wellbeing and support programs at colleges of veterinary medicine, develop best practices in veterinary counseling and wellbeing agendas within colleges, and provide counsel and expertise to veterinary leadership. Recently, she helped launch the AVMA's Workplace Wellbeing Certificate Program to support veterinary professionals in developing the knowledge and skills needed to create healthy work systems and AVMA's Brave Space Certificate Program which explores the impact of stereotyping, unconscious bias, and workplace harassment.

In 2020, Dr. Brandt was elected as a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice (NAP) in Social Work. She received her Ph.D. and Master of Social Work from The Ohio State University and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Sociology with a Minor in Spanish from the University of Indianapolis.



**Marci Kirk, DVM**

Assistant Director—Recent Graduate Initiatives  
American Veterinary Medical Association

Dr. Marci Kirk is a 2011 graduate from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. She practiced small animal medicine for five years before joining the staff at the AVMA where she is currently the Assistant Director for Recent Graduate Initiatives. Prior to transitioning out of private practice, Dr. Kirk was a member of the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association's inaugural Power of 10 class. This program sparked a passion for

leadership and helping others achieve their goals. Through her work at the AVMA, Dr. Kirk provides staff support to the Early Career Development Committee and is a co-host of AVMA's My Veterinary Life Podcast. Outside of work, Dr. Kirk is an avid runner and enjoys traveling with her husband, especially to Walt Disney World and usually for a race weekend. She also shares her home and most of her social media posts with her two dogs- Charlie, the best good boy and Bucky, the aspiring good boy.

## Session Leaders



### Joseph Hahn, DVM, BBAW

Executive Director of the US Companion Animal and Equine Professional Services  
Merck Animal Health

Dr. Hahn has been with Merck Animal Health for 12 years with roles of increasing responsibility. He started with us in the field as a Professional Services Veterinarian and then as Associate Director of Professional Services for the Midwest/West Zone. Most recently, Dr. Hahn served as Director of the U.S. Companion Animal & Equine Pharmacovigilance team, where he amplified the customer experience and expanded connections with the field force through collaborating on forward-thinking initiatives, such as the Nobivac® Relief Plan and automatic download of case reports into the MAXX system. Not to mention, he has also assisted with Learning & Development to deliver new hire training courses.

Prior to Merck, Dr. Hahn was in practice for 10 years where he gained experience working with everything from large corporate practices to small-single doctor clinics. He also worked with Chicago Veterinary Emergency Services, which was the city's only emergency clinic at the time that saw an average of 120 caseloads per month.

Dr. Hahn received his DVM degree from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. He is an avid cyclist and member of the "Peloton Club," (so let him know when you want to meet for a virtual ride). He currently resides in Chicago and is looking forward to the warmer months when he can get outside.



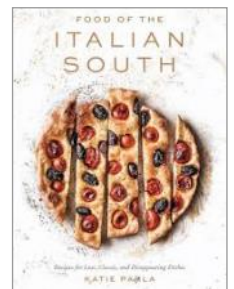
### Katie Parla

Katie Parla is an Italy-based food and beverage writer, culinary guide, educator, and award-winning cookbook author. She is the cohost of the Gola podcast about Italian food and culture and regularly appears as an Italy expert on CNN, the Travel Channel, and the History Channel. Her Emmy-nominated TV program "Katie Parla's Rome" airs on Recipe.TV.

Originally from New Jersey, she has an art history degree from Yale, a master's degree in Italian Gastronomic Culture from the Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata", a sommelier certificate from the Federazione Italiana Sommelier Albergatori Ristoratori, and an archeological speleology certification from the city of Rome.

Katie's mission is to highlight great food and beverages, praise the people dedicated to feeding us well, and to get readers talking about what they are eating and drinking. She focuses special attention on Rome, threats to local food culture, and critical reviews of restaurants and trends.

In her latest cookbook, *Food of the Italian South*, Katie shares rich recipes and historical and cultural insights that encapsulate the miles of rugged beaches, sheep-dotted mountains, meditatively quiet towns, and, most important, culinary traditions unique to this precious piece of Italy.





## Thank you to our Strategic Initiative Partners

whose contributions allow VMAE to deliver world-class education and resources that help VMA executives create thriving organizations and provide effective leadership within the veterinary profession.

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**REGISTRATION FEES - REGISTRATION INCREASES BY \$200 AFTER JUNE 28**

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> VMAE Member                    | \$295 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VMAE Member Staff              | \$395 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-member VMA Executive       | \$595 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Aperitivo w/Katie Parla</i> | \$0   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awards Celebration/Happy Hour  | \$0   |

**GRAND TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

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**HOW TO REGISTER**

- ONLINE: [www.vmae.org](http://www.vmae.org)
- BY FAX: 866-628-4856

Cancellations received on or before June 28 will receive a full refund less a \$50 administrative fee.  
No refunds will be issued for cancellations after June 28 or for no shows.

**Register by June 28 and save \$200**



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VMAE exists to help VMA executives create thriving organizations and provide effective leadership within the veterinary profession.