Global comprehensive health organization, One Health Commission locates to ISU

AMES, Iowa – The One Health Commission, a globally focused organization dedicated to promoting improved health of people, animals, plants and the environment is locating at the Iowa State University Research Park.

The Commission was formed in 2009 with the mission of establishing “closer professional interactions, collaborations, and educational opportunities” for physicians, veterinarians, and other health science-related professionals.

Iowa State University is enthusiastic about having the organization headquarters in Ames.

“We are excited about the One Health Commission locating at ISU. This partnership will allow us to interact across disciplines to improve the health of people, animals and our environment,” said Sharron Quisenberry, vice president for research and economic development at ISU.

Office operations for the One Health Commission will be established with the ISU Nutrition and Wellness Research Center.

The increasing convergence of humans, domestic animals, wildlife and the environment are factors that drove the formation of the Commission.

According to worldwide statistics, nearly 75 percent of all emerging human infectious diseases originate in animals.

“We live in a changing environment populated by interconnected human and animal contact, creating integrated challenges,” said Dr. Roger Mahr, chief executive officer of the One Health Commission.
Commission. “These challenges require integrated solutions and call for collaborative leadership.”

While traditionally, human and animal health have been studied separately, they are very intertwined, according to Dr. Al Osbahr, chair of the One Health Commission Board of Directors and the American Medical Association (AMA) representative to the One Health Commission.

“The One Health Commission will be a vehicle for various medical professionals to sit down and work together which really hasn’t happened to any great extent in the past,” said Osbahr. “When we ignore problems in animal health and think they are restricted to animal health, we find these lead to medical problems in humans.”

Mahr, a former president of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), said Iowa State University is the right fit to be a leading partner for One Health primarily due to the cooperative education, research and outreach tradition at ISU and the university’s ongoing commitment to the One Health approach.

“This significant commitment of interdisciplinary leadership put forth by Iowa State University and its One Health consortium provides the broad foundational support needed by the Commission to become fully operational, to establish a ‘go-to resource’ for all things One Health,” said Mahr.

The One Health Commission will address some of the rising threats to human and animal health.

- Of the 1,461 diseases now recognized in humans, 60 percent are due to multi-host pathogens that affect multiple species.

- With the rise of antibiotic resistance, there is a need for a holistic approach and a better understanding of resistance that is related to the use of antibiotic drugs.

- Environmental health may affect human and animal health through contamination, pollution and poor conditions that may lead to new infectious agents.

- Emerging animal diseases, and food and water borne diseases threaten human and animal health around the world.
Current member organizations of the One Health Commission are the AMA, AVMA, American Public Health Association (APHA), Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA).

Other entities committed to Iowa State’s One Health consortium include the ISU Colleges of Veterinary Medicine, Agriculture and Life Sciences, Business, Design, Engineering, Human Sciences, and Liberal Arts and Sciences; the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine and College of Public Health; the University of Nebraska-Omaha Colleges of Medicine and Public Health; the USDA Agricultural Research Service National Animal Disease Center and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services National Veterinary Services Laboratories; the Center for Food Security and Public Health; the Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics; the Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute; the Plant Sciences Institute; and the Center for Advanced Host Defense and Translational Medicine.

For more information on the One Health Commission, visit www.onehealthcommission.org.

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