

**AVMA President-elect Speech**  
**House of Delegates Session**  
**Lori Teller, DVM, DABVP (canine/feline), CVJ**  
**July 29, 2022**

Howdy!

I've been given this time to share my thoughts with you about the upcoming year, when I will serve as your President. But first, I have some questions for YOU.

Raise your hand if you are a veterinarian, veterinary technician, or a stakeholder with an interest in the veterinary profession...

Raise your hand if you are a human being...

Raise your hand if you are a mom, a spouse or significant other of a mom, or have or have had a mother or mother-figure who has been an important part of your life...

(PAUSE)

I think just about everyone in the room raised a hand in response to those questions.

For the veterinarians and interested stakeholders: In my role as AVMA President, I look forward to connecting with you and others across the country and around the world, listening to your thoughts and concerns, and sharing some of the amazing work that the AVMA is doing. I know there will continue to be many more thoughtful conversations on workforce challenges; utilization of technicians and staff; telemedicine; DEI; and the many other topics that impact what we do every day. Not only will I have these conversations within the profession, but also outside the profession—with the media, the legislature and regulatory agencies, and the general public. The AVMA is here to **protect, promote** and **advance** the veterinary profession. This is what we do: Every. Single. Day. And we are really good at it! We are really good at it because our focus is on YOU, the veterinarian.

I will also address the narrative of veterinary medicine. I LOVE being a veterinarian and cannot imagine doing anything else. No profession is perfect, and we have real issues that the AVMA continues to address and tackle. We also have much to celebrate, and I want to make sure we remember that too. So when I have the opportunity to meet with you and our colleagues, be sure to tell me about your concerns, AND be sure to share with me your joys and accomplishments because I also want to celebrate those as well. A strong, successful profession is built on expanding the wonderful things we do, and changing the things that keep us from achieving those accomplishments.

To all of the human beings, I have 2 thoughts:

#1: The AVMA is made up of human beings. Every volunteer, every member, and everyone on staff is a human being. The AVMA is not an obscure wizard hiding behind a curtain. It is a group of imperfect people doing the best we can to do the right things for veterinarians, the animals entrusted within our care, and the profession as a whole. We all believe very strongly in our responsibility to protect, promote, and advance the veterinary profession; in fact, we put our hearts and souls into it on a daily basis.

#2: Human beings are complicated creatures. WE are complicated creatures. This is a beautiful thing. It also means that we are more than veterinarians. We may be runners, knitters, gardeners, bookworms, adventure-seekers, or beer connoisseurs. We may volunteer with scout troops, the PTO, our houses of worship, a food bank or homeless shelter, or a local arts organization. I encourage you to find and embrace your non-veterinary niche as well. Nourishing all parts of our complicated selves makes us better veterinarians—and better people.

So from one human being to another, let's work together to be role models for well-being, for dignity, for kindness, and for respect. As I represent the AVMA in the coming year, I hope I can be the epitome of that.

And last but certainly not least, for the moms, those who live with a mom, and those who have or have had a mom or mother-figure in your life: Moms are the best multitaskers on the planet. We get stuff done. We feel all the feelings, not only our own, but those of our nearest and dearest. We feel the greatest joy when our child accomplishes a goal and the deepest pain when our child is hurt. But do you know what happens when someone threatens our child? We go all Mama Bear on them. Have you ever seen an angry mother—or an angry bear? Get out of the way! As president of the AVMA and it's First Mom, I will work hard to build bridges, increase our collaborative efforts, and continue to focus on improving veterinary medicine for all of us. But I promise you, when someone threatens our profession, have no fear, because Mama Bear is here.

Shout outs and thank yous...