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This letter is sent to you on behalf of the members of the American Veterinary Dental College - Academy of Veterinary Dentistry - European Veterinary Dental College Equine Veterinary Dental Specialty Committees.

Dear _____,

As you are probably aware, there has been a considerable increase in interest in equine veterinary dentistry recently, to the point that several organizations interested in or offering educational activities or certification in equine veterinary dentistry have been established. There is recognition that a formal specialty college in equine veterinary dentistry may now be justifiable.

Please note that the phrase 'equine veterinary dentistry' is used in this letter. This is in recognition that the phrase 'equine dentistry' covers both veterinary and non-veterinary aspects of equine dentistry. To avoid becoming mired in the confusion that has dogged 'equine dentistry' in some parts of the world as a result of regulatory issues associated with lay "equine dentists" or equine dental technicians, the phrase equine veterinary dentistry is consistently used here to ensure that the activities proposed relate to the management of equine dental health and disease by specialist veterinarians.

You may already be aware that 'dentistry' is recognized at the specialist level in the form of the American Veterinary Dental College, the European Veterinary Dental College and at Fellowship level in the Dentistry chapter of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists. These dental specialist organizations do not narrow their areas of interest to particular species, and there are veterinarians with equine dental interest and experience who are diplomates of the American Veterinary Dental College (AVDC, which is

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recognized as the dental specialist organization in North American by the American Board of Veterinary Specialists - ABVS), and the European Veterinary Dental College (which is recognized as the dental specialist organization in Europe by the European Board of Veterinary Specialists - EBVS). There are also veterinarians who are not diplomates of either AVDC or EVDC who have developed expertise in equine veterinary dentistry. Although there is considerable overlap in the knowledge, diagnostic techniques and dental treatment procedures used in all species, it is now recognized that there is probably a sufficient body of equine veterinary dental knowledge and need for specialist-level equine veterinary dental services that would support establishment of a stand-alone equine veterinary dental specialty.

In Australasia, Europe and North American, use of the term ‘specialist’ in a veterinary context is limited to holders of the Fellowship (Australasia) or Diploma (Europe and North America) in a recognized veterinary specialty organization (RVSO). Diplomates of AVDC and EVDC and other interested individuals in Europe and North America have agreed that pursuit of recognition of an equine veterinary specialty is appropriate, and the Boards of Directors of both AVDC and EVDC have approved investigating founding equine veterinary dental specialty colleges. Given the number of non-accredited equine veterinary dental certification organizations currently in existence or planned, and noting that non-accredited organizations do not result in awarding certification that permits recognition as a specialist, there seems to be no point to pursuing yet another non-accredited veterinary dental organization. One of the non-accredited equine veterinary dental certification organizations that has been established for a number of years is the Equine Fellow track of the Academy of Veterinary Dentistry; the Board of Directors of the Academy has agreed to collaborate with AVDC in the establishment of a College of Equine Veterinary Dentistry; a joint Equine Veterinary Dentistry Specialty Committee has been set up by the Boards of Directors of AVDC and the Academy. The writers of this letter are the members of this AVDC-Academy Equine Collaborative Committee and members of the EVDC Equine Specialty Committee.

Given that the number of veterinarians with training and experience suitable for recognition as specialists initially or in the first few years following establishment of a specialist equine veterinary dental college is limited, and that viability of new specialty colleges is a concern of ABVS and EBVS (because it is in no-one’s interest to establish a nonviable College), thought has been given to establishing a College at a supra-continental level so that the number of initial diplomates and potential ‘board-eligible’ veterinarians (i.e. those permitted to take the examination without further training or who are already in training programs that may meet the credentials criteria for the new College) is sufficiently large to ensure the success of the College. Under this scenario, a unified petition could be submitted contemporaneously to ABVS by AVDC and to EBVS by EVDC. If it proves to not be practical to submit a unified petition, separate formal petitions for recognition of a new specialty will be submitted to ABVS under the AVDC umbrella and to EBVS under the EVDC umbrella. The veterinarians that this letter is addressed to include veterinarians in Australasia; if a unified petition is submitted to ABVS and EBVS, the signers of this letter would welcome the opportunity to include the possibility of petitioning the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (ANZCVSc) for formation of an equine dental Fellowship level program as part of ANZCVSc.

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This letter is addressed to you and other leaders in the world of equine dentistry to ask your assistance in the work of the AVDC-Academy-EVDC Equine Veterinary Dental Specialist Committee. AVDC, EVDC and the Academy recognize that there are individuals who may not be diplomates of AVDC or EVDC or are not Academy Equine Fellows and who have much to contribute to formation of an equine veterinary dental specialty college. We extend an invitation to you to participate in identifying members of a formal Organizing Committee for a College of Equine Veterinary Dentistry (CEVD). The requirements for establishing an ABVS-recognized and an EBVS-recognized specialty are laid out in the ABVS and EBVS on-line documents (available at http://www.avma.org/education/abvs/abvs_policies_II.asp and <http://www.ebvs.org/index.php>); the ABVS and EBVS requirements are very similar and a summary is provided at the end of this letter.

The responses to this widely circulated request for identification of individuals who may be interested in establishment of an equine veterinary dental specialty will be used to identify a list of about 30 suitably qualified individuals who would then be invited to form the Specialty Organizing Committee, with the understanding that, if they accept the invitation, they would be willing to participate in a Delphi-like process (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphi_method) to draft a Constitution, By-Laws and other primary documents (covering training program pre-requisites, duration, supervision, syllabus etc.; examination methodology and standards; method of governance; etc.). AVDC has agreed to provide administrative support for this process. Some parts of the Delphi process are generally best pursued anonymously and require appointment of a facilitator who will collate the responses as the process moves through its various stages; AVDC Executive Secretary Colin Harvey has agreed to be the facilitator, if this is acceptable to the individuals who will form the Specialist Organizing Committee.

Members of an ABVS or EBVS Specialty Organizing Committee must meet one or more of the following requirements:

1. Be a professor of the proposed specialty in a college or department of veterinary medicine.
2. Be an author of important publications resulting from research or practice in the specialty.
3. Have at least 10 years' experience in the specialty and, by teaching, research, or practice, have contributed substantially to the development of the specialty.
4. Have advanced training in the specialty and have demonstrated competency through teaching, research, or practice in the specialty to which most of the individual's professional time is devoted.

Members of the Specialty Organizing Committee:

- a. Shall include representatives from academia, research, industry, government, and the private sector.
- b. Shall come from diverse geographical areas.

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- c. May include diplomates of another RVSO to assist in the organization of the new specialty but who do not wish to become a diplomate of the new specialty.
- d. May or may not automatically become Charter Diplomates of the new specialty organization upon its recognition; however, all veterinarians under consideration to become charter diplomates must be members of the Organizing Committee.
May include diplomates of another

Please consider these requirements and send me a list of individuals who you believe would potentially qualify under one or more of these categories.

Please note that nomination for or membership in the Specialty Organizing Committee does not necessarily imply that the individual will be granted 'charter diplomate' status (a 'charter diplomate' is an individual whose professional qualifications and experience are sufficiently credible that they are invited to be diplomates of the new College without having to take the entrance examination). Some specialties organize themselves without charter diplomates (i.e. everyone with credentials deemed suitable by the Specialty Organizing Committee has to take the examination). Other specialties offer charter diplomate status to selected individuals and offer immediate entry to the examination to other individuals with pre-defined credentials such that this second group of individuals do not have to undertake any additional training before taking the examination. A third option is that, in addition to or in place of the two options previously mentioned, 'advanced standing' is offered to some individuals with pre-defined credentials who are then eligible to take the examination after completing specified parts of the credentials requirements.

It will be the job of the Specialty Organizing Committee to determine which of these routes to take upon establishment of the College. The list of charter diplomates is closed upon establishment of the College, and a pre-determined period of e.g. up to five years would be permitted for individuals to make themselves known to the College for consideration of either direct entrance to the examination or advanced standing. Thus it is in the best interests of everybody that the planning process and drafts of documents establishing the College are known early on to everyone that is potentially interested, as this will avoid misunderstandings and possible recrimination later.

If you choose to respond to this request, please think wisely about who you include. For the process to be successful, it needs to identify individuals who are knowledgeable and successful equine veterinary dentists and who will be willing and able to contribute to the formation of the new college. We recognize that 'ability to contribute' is a difficult thing to pre-determine, as career interests and time available for and interest in organizational work change. What is clear is that it would be better to include more people (which may include individuals who will not be willing to contribute) on your list than to miss someone who has both credibility in equine dentistry and an interest in establishment of an equine veterinary dental specialty college.

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Don't be shy - feel free to include yourself if you are interested in participating at the Specialist Organizing Committee level and you believe you meet one or more of the ABVS/EBVS criteria – the fact that you are on the list of individuals to whom this letter was sent indicates that you may be eligible!

What will be the next step? One simple way forward would be to select the most commonly nominated individuals as members of the Specialty Organizing Committee. However; this would likely result in an undercount of individuals who have been very active locally but have not had the opportunity or desire to participate in a larger sphere e.g. as authors or presenters at meetings, and thus are not well known nationally or internationally. The process will no doubt sort itself out based on the responses received.

Please provide the full name, location (full address not needed at this point) and, when possible, the e-mail address of the individuals you nominate. There is no need to include a CV or other information about the individuals you nominate. **Please use the table below to indicate which of the criteria the individual meets as a potential member of the Specialist Organizing Committee.** It is likely that some individuals will be nominated by several or perhaps many people – please do not assume that because someone is well known, s/he will be nominated by others – the number of nominations per individual will have some significance in determining who is eligible for membership in the Organizing Committee.

| Name | Location | E-mail address | Criteria for Organizing Committee Membership – check each that applies | | | | Comments (optional) |
|------|----------|----------------|--|--|--|--|---------------------|
| | | | Professor of equine veterinary dentistry at a veterinary school. | Author of relevant and important publications in equine dentistry. | 10 years or more in teaching, research or practice and contributed substantially to the development of equine dentistry. | Has advanced training and demonstrated competency, and most of his/her professional time is devoted to equine dentistry. | |
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Please add rows to the table or use an additional page to include additional names.

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Please send your responses by e-mail to ExecSec@AVDC.org within the next four weeks. You are welcome to share this letter with other suitably qualified veterinarians, to ensure that this invitation is circulated as widely as possible.

The next step will be gathering the CVs of individuals who 'rise to the top' from this initial invitation, to identify a draft list of potential Specialty Organizing Committee members for this initial group to endorse or comment on.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this process.

Colin Harvey

Executive Secretary, American Veterinary Dental College, on behalf of the members of the AVDC-Academy Equine Veterinary Dental Committee and the EVDC Equine Dental Committee.

Members of the Committees:

Jennifer Rawlinson, DVM, Dip AVDC (Committee Chair)

Randi Brannan DVM, Dip AVDC

David Klugh DVM, Fellow AVD-Equine

Gary Goldstein, DVM, Dip AVDC

Edward Earley, DVM, Fellow AVD-Equine

Cedric Tutt, BVSc, Dip EVDC (EVDC Equine Sub-specialty Chair)

Peter Fahrenkrug, DVM, DDS, DipEVDC

Alessandro De Simoi, BVSc, Dip EVDC

Paddy Dixon, PhD

Henry Tremaine, Dip EVCS Equine

Peter Stelzer, DVM.

Addendum

Requirements for Recognition of a Proposed Recognized Veterinary Specialty Organization (RVSO)

(distilled from the relevant ABVS, EBVS and ANZCVSc documents)

The petition for recognition of a new specialty organization must:

1. Demonstrate that:
 - a. The proposed specialty is a distinct and identifiable discipline supported by a base of scientific knowledge and practice.
 - b. Improved veterinary medical services will be provided to the public.
 - c. Its diplomates will achieve a defined specialist standard.
 - d. A necessary number of potential diplomates will be available to serve a clearly defined need within the profession and for the public.

2. Establish clearly stated standards for admission to membership:
 - a. Establish approved routes through education, training, and experience to qualify candidates for examination, including part-time or alternate pathway training programs.
 - b. Ensure that all training or experience requirements and any other prerequisites for examination serve the purpose of assessing the competency of the candidate and are amenable to evaluation.
 - c. Examine only veterinarians who meet the education, training, and experience requirements established by the RVSO, and who demonstrate unquestionable moral character and ethical professional behavior.
 - d. Certify only veterinarians who have demonstrated, by meeting established training and/or experience requirements and by attaining acceptable scores on comprehensive examinations administered by the RVSO, their fitness and ability to practice the specialty.

3. Establish examination procedures such that:
 - a. Examinations reflect the professional competence expected of the diplomate.
 - b. Candidates receive a content outline (blueprint) of the exam and the examination format prior to the exam.
 - c. Candidates are informed prior to the examination of the passing point, or, if this is not determined in advance, the method by which the passing point will be set.
 - d. Candidates failing the examination can receive information on reasons why they failed the examination.
 - e. Personal conflict, or the appearance of conflict of interest, that could affect the results of examinations will be avoided.
4. Provide certificates attesting to diplomate status: Certificates are to be time-limited and the procedures for recertification must be clearly specified at the time that certificates are issued to new diplomates.
5. Have in place a formal appeal procedure that is made available for candidates in case of an adverse decision. The final decision on an appeal shall not be made by a Board or committee that made the original adverse decision.
6. Provide evidence that the organization is legally incorporated and has in place a system for financial management.

Procedures for Obtaining Recognition of a Proposed Veterinary Specialty Organization:

1. A group of veterinarians considering requesting recognition of a specialty organization shall submit a letter of intent to the relevant Board of Veterinary Specialists (BVS). The BVS will appoint liaisons; the liaisons will provide clarification and support during the development process, and shall report progress periodically to the BVS.

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2. Organizing Committee: A veterinary specialty organization seeking BVS recognition shall designate an Organizing Committee appropriate in number to conduct the business of the specialty and to achieve provisional recognition. Members of the organizing committee shall be veterinarians recognized as exceptionally qualified by meeting one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. Be a professor of the proposed specialty in a college or department of veterinary medicine.
 - b. Be an author of important publications resulting from research or practice in the specialty.
 - c. Have at least 10 years' experience in the specialty and, by teaching, research, or practice, have contributed substantially to the development of the specialty.
 - d. Have advanced training in the specialty and have demonstrated competency through teaching, research, or practice in the specialty to which most of the individual's professional time is devoted.

The petition is to contain a curriculum vitae for each member of the organizing committee.

Members of the Organizing Committee shall, to the extent appropriate:

- a. Include representatives from academia, research, industry, government, and the private sector.
- b. Come from diverse geographical areas.

Members of the Organizing Committee:

- a. May include diplomates of another RVSO to assist in the organization of the new specialty but who do not wish to become a diplomate of the new specialty.
- b. May or may not automatically become Charter Diplomates of the new specialty organization upon its recognition; all veterinarians under consideration to become charter diplomates must be members of the Organizing Committee.

3. A formal petition for recognition of the proposed veterinary specialty organization shall be submitted within four years of submitting the letter of intent.
4. The BVS reviews the petition and makes appropriate suggestions to the organizing committee regarding additions or corrections necessary before recognition can be awarded.
5. If the (revised as necessary) petition is deemed satisfactory by a vote of the members of the BVS after a period of public comment, the organization is awarded provisional recognition by the BVS. As of that time, the provisionally recognized VSO (P-RVSO) takes any necessary steps to complete formalization of its structure and proceeds to function under its BVS-approved Constitution and/or By-Laws; the P-RVSO may examine and certify candidates, collect dues, send a representative to BVS meetings, and conduct other business as specified in its Constitution and/or By-Laws.

6. After a minimum of four years but not more than ten years of provisional recognition, the VSO may submit a request for full recognition to the BVS, indicating that the organization is fully functional as a RVSO. The BVS reviews the petition for full recognition and votes to award full recognition, seek clarification, continue provisional recognition or withdraw recognition.