Explanation of CPAC and COBTA

Donald W. Stremme, VMD
aquavetmail@gmail.com

As a CPAC committee member, I was recommended by AAZV and then appointed by the AVMA to this committee. We meet twice a year. I ask for input from various entities, since I officially represent Zoos and Wildlife, and unofficially Aquaria, since the aquatic member really only represents the aquatic industry.

I think most AAZV and Wildlife Vets don't understand the purpose of CPAC and COBTA or what they can ask me to present, so I wanted to explain it.

CPAC serves as an advisory committee to the Council on Biological and Therapeutic Agents (COBTA). We meet at the same time in the same room, which is quite interesting but works.

COBTA consists of 12 elected members representing Microbiology, Immunology, Pharmacology, Clinical Pharmacology, Small Animal Practice, Food Animal Practice, Equine Practice, Epidemiology, Industry and 3 at large.

COBTA is charged with:
- Advise the AVMA Board of Directors in the promotion of interest in the efficacy and proper use of biologic and therapeutic units in the practice of veterinary medicine;
- Serve as an informational and advisory resource for the various agents of the Association on issues pertaining to biologic and therapeutic agents;
- Advise the Board of Directors in formulating positions concerning proposed or existing rules, regulations, and legislation and maintain awareness of activities and proposed actions by divisions of state and national governments concerned with veterinary biologic and therapeutic agents.

CPAC is the advisory committee charged with proposing issues and problems clinical practitioners are experiencing to COBTA and then to help discuss and resolve these things. COBTA council members are elected, but CPAC members are appointed by related organizations or recommended by organizations to be appointed by the AVMA.

CPAC members include representatives from the Council on Biologic and Therapeutic Agents, the American Animal Hospital Association, the American

Association of Avian Pathologists, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, the American Association of Equine Practitioners, the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, the American Association of Feline Practitioners, aquaculture and seafood medicine, zoo and wildlife medicine, and one representing the Student AVMA (SAVMA).

Various additional people (experts in a field) are invited to meetings depending on the agenda and need. A representative from the USDA is usually included and sometimes also from the FDA.

Projects over the last 3 years have included things like:

Opioid shortage response
Veterinary Compounding Issues – relating to USDA rules for human medicine and issues for minor species
Supplements / Neutroceuticals / Regulation / Effective? Research? Source (trusted?)?
Cannabis regulations and scheduling and legalities
Vaccine Licensing and production
Prescription requirements and legal issues relating to USDA rules
Molecular Diagnostics

Once we have agreed on various issues involving one of these major topics, it is sent to the AVMA for review. They either return it to us for changes, approve it or send it to the lawyers for more work, approval, etc. The purpose is to help the AVMA develop/have a valid and legal opinion on these things.

When I ask for input before meetings it is helpful to understand how this all works and what input I can actually present. Basically is must be relating to biological and therapeutics. For example, one year someone asked me for help with temporary licensing in another state during emergencies, but that is not what this committee would handle. Another question I received was why a pharmacy in one state would not sell Lupron to the practitioner to resell in smaller amounts. That turned out to be a state ruling, so nothing this committee could help with. An example of what I could bring up for discussion would be questions about using, prescribing or discussing various cannabis products.