

## **“One Medicine” Initiative Holds Potential for Chicago—and Global—Impact**

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The coming year could bring the start of an important initiative that would elevate the role of our College in Chicago and across the nation on the public health scene.

In January we will host a colloquium to explore establishing a “Center for One Medicine”—a program that would incorporate teaching, research, and service activities focused at the intersection of animal, human, public, and environmental health.

Since the early days of our profession, veterinarians have played a central role in public health issues, especially in detecting, researching, and preventing infectious diseases of animal origin. Today these diseases—avian influenza, SARS, and BSE—pose as great a threat to global health as did the brucellosis, cholera, and tuberculosis of the past century.

As globalization speeds the spread of people, animals and microbes, as human encroachment whittles away the wild places, new public health threats are rapidly emerging. Veterinarians are the only health professionals trained in multispecies comparative medicine and able to grasp the complex relationships among human health, domestic and wild animal health, agriculture, and the environment.

The January colloquium will involve leaders from state and federal legislative bodies, from state and federal regulatory agencies, and from the Chicago-area zoological institutions along with faculty from the Urbana and Chicago campuses of the University of Illinois.

Organized by faculty members Jack Herrmann, Yvette Johnson, and Fred Troutt, this colloquium represents a first step in pursuing a key initiative in our strategic plan. The proposed Center for One Medicine would meet pressing societal needs and would mesh with campus strategic priorities: preparing the next generation of leaders that will shape our world, raising our profile in Chicago, and strengthening our impact in health-related fields.

Stay tuned.