In my inaugural column last August, I wrote about how meeting the demands of our profession, living life and managing a family can strain our well-being. As your AVMA president, building a culture of well-being, diversity, inclusion, and belonging within the entire veterinary team remains a priority for me.

There has been some promising progress in our work to improve mental health and wellbeing among our veterinary teams, as shown in the latest Veterinary Wellbeing Study conducted by Merck Animal Health in collaboration with the AVMA. Results of the study indicate our efforts are resulting in healthier and more satisfying careers for veterinary teams. For more information about the study, please visit merck-animal-health-usa.com.

We are committed to providing members of our profession with the tools and resources to help develop and maintain healthy individuals and teams. Late last year, the AVMA launched an updated version of its Workplace Wellbeing Certificate Program, which has been renamed Workplace wellbeing 1: Setting the foundation. It includes two new modules: “A New Era of Wellbeing at Work” and “The Intersection of Workplace Wellbeing and Conflict.” Building on key information and skills covered in this program, the AVMA has also launched Workplace wellbeing 2: Self and social awareness, which provides a deep dive into three areas central to workplace wellbeing: self-awareness, social awareness, and conflict management. Both certificate programs are CE eligible and can be accessed on our digital education platform, AVMA Axon.

One of the most critical ways to enhance wellbeing is to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Organizations that give precedence to DEI play a vital role in protecting and enhancing the mental and emotional health of their employees. This is especially crucial in the veterinary profession, where we often face significant stressors such as high-pressure work environments, substantial emotional tolls, and a need for a sense of belonging. To help increase understanding of the vital intersection of DEI and enhancing wellbeing and emotional health, the AVMA will be hosting the inaugural Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Wellbeing (DEIW) Summit November 7-9 in Atlanta. The event, designed for academicians and veterinary professionals, is aimed at influencing attendees’ personal and professional perspectives around DEIW and will consist of workshops, keynotes, panel discussions, and much more. Please save the date for this important summit. You can find more information at avma.org/events and on AVMA social media channels.

I found it personally and professionally rewarding to have participated in the AVMA’s Workplace Wellbeing and Brave Space Certificate Programs and Journey for Teams modules. They have all helped me foster a healthier and more supportive atmosphere in my workplace. I will now be dedicating time to continuing my journey by taking advantage of the new programs to expand my ability to create a sense of unity and understanding in all aspects of my life and work.

Rena Carlson, DVM

I want to hear from you. Please reach out to me with your comments, questions and concerns at president@avma.org.