



## **What is One Health all about?**

The term ‘One Health’ refers to the interconnectedness and interdependency of human, animal (wild and domestic) and environmental health. The resurrection of this ancient concept began in the late 1990s when ecologists and wildlife conservationists realized that our specialized health professional systems had forced us into silos that never interact. The concept was embraced by the veterinary medical profession and catapulted into the human health domain when the world was beset by diseases that are transmitted from animals to people such as AIDS, Avian Influenza, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Nipah and Ebola viruses, and many others. Our understanding of the need for a One Health, multidisciplinary approach to complex health problems expanded further with the realizations that urbanization and economic development can affect human and animal health, that vector-borne zoonoses such as Babesiosis, Bartonellosis, Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Zika virus and others pose serious health and economic threats to human and animal populations, that understanding diseases and conditions shared by people and animals can lead to preventive and therapeutic measures that benefit both, that food and water safety and security for all living things depends on conservation and soil health, that antimicrobial resistance among people and animals has an unavoidable environmental component, and that we cannot have good human health and welfare without good animal, plant and environmental health and welfare. One Health has many faces. Indeed, *every* profession must be at the table if we are to bridge our current siloed systems, thereby allowing us to achieve long term health goals for people, animals and the environment and in turn contribute to global security.

## **What is the One Health Commission?**

Chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the [One Health Commission](#) (OHC) is a prominent, international body of action-oriented, One Health-dedicated individuals and organizations. Its programs are designed to serve as a gateway for the active exchange of One Health-related information and knowledge, sharing of resources, and collaborative initiatives that extend beyond disciplinary boundaries. Based in central North Carolina and working globally, it is governed by a Board of Direc-

tors made up of representatives of organizational sponsors.

## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to create, educate and support networks to improve shared health outcomes and well-being of people, animals and plants and to promote ecosystem resilience through a collaborative, local to global One Health approach.

## **Achievements**

### ***Connecting the Global One Health Community***

The Commission provides opportunities for One Health leaders around the world to share their programs and initiatives. Its First (2014) and Second (2016) International Who’s Who in One Health online webinars drew over 1,500 participants from more than 35 countries. The OHC manages a growing [Global One Health Community listserv](#) of over 8,000 international participants, distributes a monthly global [One Health Happenings newsletter](#) of One Health news, events, opportunities, announcements and publications and maintains an ever-expanding global directory of [‘Who’s Who in One Health’](#). Its website serves as a clearinghouse for One Health [events](#), [scientific publications](#), relevant popular media [news items](#), training, employment and funding [opportunities](#). It also provides global outreach and representation of One Health at major international conferences.

### ***Creating and Leading One Health Actions***

Many of our ‘wicked’ health challenges, like antimicrobial resistance, can be controversial. The Commission provides a [‘safe zone’](#) for interprofessional conversations, projects and actions. Volunteer [One Health Action Teams](#), made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds identify education and public health gaps and work to address them. Examples include the OHC [Bat Rabies Education Team](#), the International [One Health Education Task Force and its US affiliate](#), the [One Health-Social Sciences Team](#) and the One Health-Ecology and Environment Team. Yet to be formed are teams to address One Health Comparative Research and Medicine, One Health-Food Safety and Security, and One Health Advocacy and Public Policy, among others. In 2016 the OHC led a stakeholder partnership to create an annual, global [One Health Day](#) which is now celebrated around the world

every year on November 3. One Health Day [2016](#) registered over 155 events in more than 35 countries. One Health Day [2017](#) had similar global participation. In 2017 the OHC partnered with the US Environmental Protection Agency on a citizen science [National Pet Health Survey](#) that collects health information on dog and cat companions and will be used by scientists, pet owners and the public to inform human health.

### ***Educating about One Health and One Health Issues***

The Commission communicates credible, science-based information on One Health issues to the public through venues such as the bi-lingual 'What is One Health' [public service radio](#) announcement and a YouTube [video](#). It hosts free global [educational webinars](#) that raise awareness and educate government officials and policy makers about the economic, public health and global security benefits of a One Health approach to shared health challenges. It also provides its online webinar platform to unincorporated One Health groups that do not otherwise have the means to share their One Health initiatives with a larger global audience. Since 2014 it has hosted or supported more than 20 such webinars on One Health topics such as [Antibiotic Resistance](#) and '[Understanding Bartonella: A One Health Perspective](#)'. In 2015 the OHC initiated a [letter to the White House](#) that was co-signed by 37 organizations and 41 individuals, encouraging the creation of One Health platforms by the U.S and United Nations agencies.

### ***Engaging and Supporting the Next Generation of One Health Professionals and Leaders***

The OHC provides students with leadership opportunities by bringing student representatives from human, animal, environmental and plant health domains onto its [Board of Directors](#). It provides them with an online meeting platform, [webpages](#), a [student listserv](#) and encouragement for student-led One Health projects with the intention of facilitating formation, very early in their careers, of trans-disciplinary relationships among emerging health professional leaders. These students have now formed an independent International [Students for One Health \(ISOH\) organization](#) for which the OHC serves as the parent organization. The Commission awards two of four \$2,000 [One Health Day Student Events Competition Awards](#) each year to multidisciplinary student teams that address meaningful local health challenges.



## **The Future**

The One Health Commission seeks to sustain and increase its impact on promoting interdisciplinary approaches to health challenges shared by people, animals and the environment. By doing so it aims to make One Health the default way of operating at all levels of academia, research, and government. The top two priorities on the Commission's wish list are to underwrite in-person, annual Board of Directors meetings for strategic planning, outcomes and performance monitoring, and to add salary for a Development Officer. This individual would be charged with identifying and leveraging new funding to support current and future OHC programs. Additional priorities include supporting One Health student leader internships and scholarships that will develop their capacity to apply and tailor One Health approaches to complex, locally meaningful health issues, providing financial support for OHC Action Teams and for the new International Students for One Health platform, compiling a bank of One Health expert speakers, offering more educational webinars to a global audience, and developing One Health advocacy materials for One Health supporters to use and share.



## **Summary**

One Health, a '[Ray of Hope for the Future](#)', has gained great traction in the US and globally. The One Health Commission provides the leadership, platform and resources to connect hundreds of One Health groups, thereby allowing them to combine forces to break through disciplinary silos and re-orient thinking and practice away from siloed interests towards interactive systems frameworks.

If the One Health concept resonates with you, and if you believe that the Commission performs a function vital to the shared health of people, animals and the environment on planet earth, please consider how you can play a part in this global effort.

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