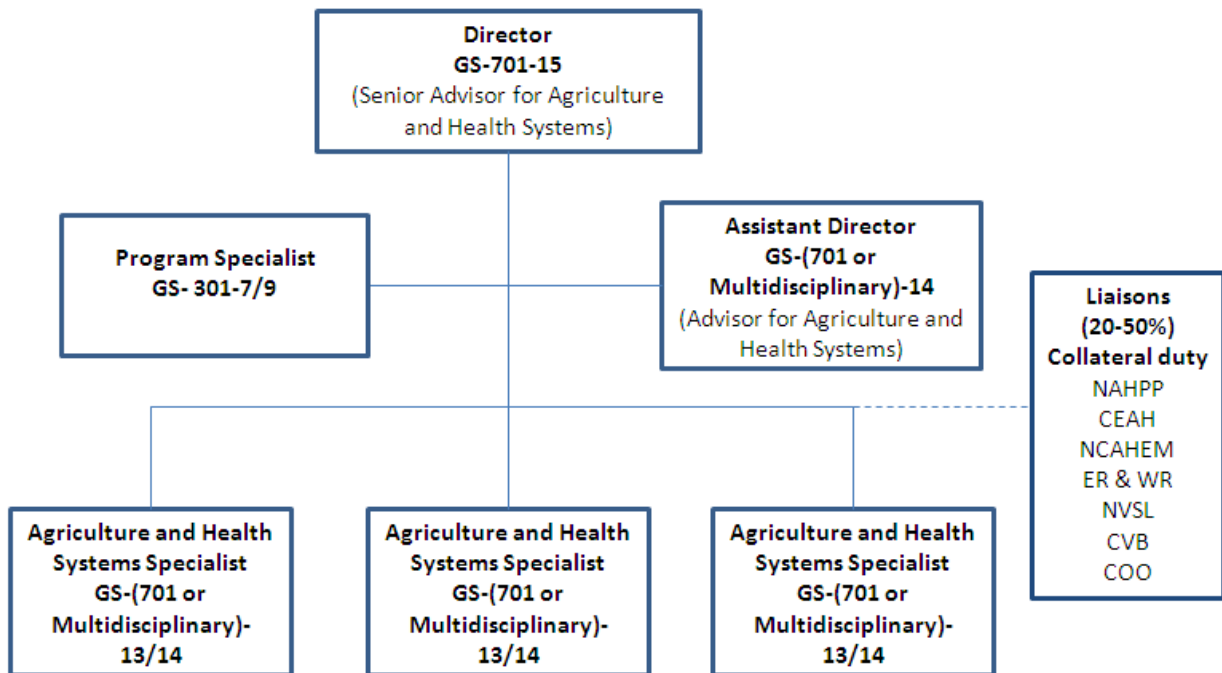


One Health Coordination Office

Introduction

The term One Health (OH) can mean many things to many people but at its core it is intended to foster a more collaborative approach to issues that transect human, animal and environmental health. The interconnections of OH issues are often complex and difficult to recognize. In addition, OH requires us to not only act within our Authority but within what could be considered our responsibility (because of our unique expertise) while acting under someone else's authority. Additionally, VS 2015's One Health initiative expands the traditional definitions of animal from livestock to all species (including public health of humans) and from a disease in an animal to an overall affect on animals.

While activities related to OH occur every day in all parts of Veterinary Services (VS) they are not yet thought of as such. Different VS units often may not be aware of the complex interconnections of OH activities that are occurring within other units or with other internal or external partners. This inherent ambiguity creates a challenge in our effort to advance the VS 2015 OH initiative within VS. In addition, outside agencies or other potential OH partners do not have a clear or direct route for bringing OH questions or collaboration needs to our collective attention. The OHCO was established to unify, clarify and advance the OH efforts so VS assets can appropriately be applied to the ever increasing complex issues that occur at the intersection of animal, human and environmental health.



Guiding Principle

The structure of the One Health Coordinating Office must facilitate weaving One Health into the organization at all levels. VS needs to have a culture that incorporates One Health into routine activities. The One Health Coordinating Office's organizational structure must contribute to coordinating these efforts and facilitating this cultural change.

Key Themes

Activities

- The One Health Coordinating Office (OHCO) will coordinate activities and work through the appropriate personnel to accomplish the activities. The necessary relationships will already be formed to allow for collaboration across other state and federal agencies when working on One Health activities; “working together works.”
- The One Health Coordinating Office needs to be outward facing and attend necessary meetings, conference calls, etc. to interact with stakeholders, but just as important if not more so, the office needs to have an inward facing responsibility to ensure VS employees are informed of the activities of the OHCO and understand their roles. By doing this, over time One Health will be integrated into the culture of Veterinary Services.
- One Health is not any one person or any one unit’s responsibility; One Health is everyone’s responsibility. This is not a new concept for VS; many of the activities we already do are One Health related. This approach is just formalizing an office to coordinate the response to ensure everyone is informed adequately and with the same information. In addition, this office can help facilitate OH as part of the VS ethos or philosophy.
- By having an OHCO that coordinates with our partners, our efforts will be leveraged and we will not be duplicating efforts. It is critical to build relationships prior to events and not just on an as-needed basis. Having an OHCO is a visible representation to our partners that we are going to “walk the walk and talk the talk.”
- The group will assist in making policy recommendations. It will be up to the VS Program Leaders (VSPL) and the Executive Team to determine how the recommendations are brought forth and implemented, if approved.
- One Health is not a black and white activity. The OHCO will need to work through the grey areas to make it black and white for both internal and external stakeholders.
- The OHCO is not replacing structure or staff VS currently has but is seeking opportunities that might not otherwise have presented themselves and bringing those opportunities to the appropriate unit within VS for further engagement. It can provide the point of entry for OH issues that may not be reaching VS currently.
- It is possible that with time (3-5 plus years) if OH becomes just the way we do things, that there can be a lessening of infrastructure of the OHCO and liaisons.

Structure (including personnel and geographic location)

- Members of the OHCO will have 100% of their time dedicated to One Health and the OHCO.
- Even with positions 100% dedication to the OHCO, it is critical to have liaisons in units to serve as points of contacts to promote One Health within their respective division. These individuals would have a defined time commitment to One Health activities and the remainder of their time would be spent on their position within their unit.
- Two people in the office should be located in Washington, D.C. The office itself should be a virtual office. Additional personnel working within the OHCO should be located in divisions of VS to assist in integrating One Health into the culture.
- Although a permanent office for now, if the office is successful and One Health is permeated into the culture, a fully staffed office may not be needed in the long term. For now though, it is not possible to say an exact timeframe for a future transition.

Skills

- Communication, consensus building and interpersonal skills are the main skills needed for those in the OHCO. Technical skills, although important, are not the main skill needed for all with the office. Those within the OHCO will need to be able to interact with many individuals, both internal and external, at all levels and need to reach back for subject matter expertise.
- Knowledge of Veterinary Services, APHIS and USDA infrastructure, programs, culture, and expertise/resources is critical to personnel in this office. Although having a DVM is beneficial, it should not be a requirement for all positions for this office.
- It was not determined that a MD is needed within this office; by building and maintaining relationships with our partners, i.e. public health service, we can reach out to them for necessary guidance.
- Some knowledge of public health will be necessary as well as epidemiology competencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Build OH partnerships and facilitate OH collaborations both within and outside of VS.
- Promote VS as a valuable resource in the OH community.
- Help direct requests for OH collaborations or assistance to appropriate resources within VS.
- Provide intra-agency leadership and coordination for existing and expanded OH activities and resources within VS.
- Engage with VS and OH partners to assess response to OH issues as needed
- Build and organize a portfolio of VS OH activities, plans, and accomplishments.
- Provide direction on how to apply current VS resources to address new One Health issues.
- Coordinate the implementation, and management of VS OH Strategic Direction tasks.
- Provide intra-agency communication and training to promote the OH concept within VS.
- Provide scientific and technical information and support for response to OH questions from the VS, APHIS and Department Leadership as needed.
- Outline resource needs to accomplish the goals of VS OH.
- Sponsor, attend, and participate in national and international meetings promoting OH.
- Provide guidance for the implementation of high priority tasks identified within the OH Strategic Plan.

Summary

The One Health Coordinating Office (OHCO) is an organizational component housed under the Office of the Deputy Administrator. The structure and guiding principle of the OHCO is to facilitate weaving One Health (OH) into the organization at all levels; and to incorporate OH into everyday activities. The OHCO's mission is to unify, clarify, and advance OH efforts so that Veterinary Services (VS) assets can appropriately be applied to the ever increasing complex issues that occur at the intersection of animal, human and environmental health.

The OHCO functions include developing, evaluating, and conducting analysis of data, programs, and operational activities designed to prevent or eliminate threats to human health originating from the agriculture sector or from emerging or newly introduced animal diseases, or toxins effecting people, animals and the environment. The OHCO also implements OH principals (the application of joint strategies at the human-animal-ecosystem interface to improve both human and animal health) through increased collaboration among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, as well as private industry to network with human health communities, and animal health and agriculture communities for enhanced global health and prosperity.