VETERINARIANS
Brought to you by your veterinarian and the American Veterinary Medical Association

to prevent the spread of diseases such as malaria, Ebola and avian influenza. Veterinarians in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also protect the health and safety of animals and people through their work in developing disease surveillance and antiterrorism procedures and protocols. Manmade and natural disasters pose significant risks to animals and humans, and veterinarians play vital roles in helping communities prepare for and recover from disasters.

MILITARY SERVICE
Veterinarians in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps are protecting the United States against bioterrorism. They are responsible for food safety, veterinary care of government-owned animals, and biomedical research and development. Officers with special education in laboratory animal medicine, pathology, microbiology, or related disciplines conduct research in military and other governmental agencies. In the U.S. Air Force, veterinarians serve in the Biomedical Science Corps as public health officers. They manage occupational illness, food borne disease, and communicable disease control programs at Air Force bases around the world. These veterinarians promote public health through surveillance of disease trends, food safety practices, and facility sanitation. Military veterinarians play a vital role rebuilding and improving animal care systems in underdeveloped and war-damaged countries. Many societies are heavily dependent upon animal agriculture, and improving the health of their animals improves the quality of life for the human community.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
Veterinarians are also employed in animal welfare, zoologic medicine, aquatic animal medicine, aerospace medicine (shuttle astronauts), animal shelter medicine, sports medicine, animal-assisted activity and therapy programs, and wildlife medicine. There are veterinarians involved in local, state and federal governments, working with legislators to shape laws that protect the health, welfare and well-being of animals and people.

Veterinarians also play critical roles in environmental protection, research, food safety, and public health.

THE ROAD TO BECOMING A VETERINARIAN
Students should perform well in general science and biology in junior high school and pursue a strong science, mathematics, and biology program in high school to prepare for pre-veterinary coursework at a college or university. Before applying to veterinary college/school, students must successfully complete university-level undergraduate prerequisites. Each college or school of veterinary medicine establishes its own pre-veterinary requirements, but typically these include demonstrating basic language and communication skills, and completion of courses in the social sciences, humanities, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics.

Admission to veterinary school is highly competitive, with the number of qualified applicants admitted varying from year to year. Applicants may be required to take a standardized test (for example, the Graduate Record Examination or GRE).

Most veterinary schools require applications through the Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS). For information about application requirements, applicant data statistics, and other admissions resources, visit www.avma.org/vmcas/vmcas.htm

After completing the required veterinary medical curriculum and earning a veterinary degree, some graduates choose to pursue additional education in one of more than 20 AVMA-recognized veterinary specialties such as surgery, internal medicine, animal behavior, dentistry, ophthalmology, pathology or preventive medicine.

IS VETERINARY MEDICINE RIGHT FOR YOU?
Today’s veterinarians are extremely dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of animals and humans. Veterinarians are animal lovers and understand the value of animals in our families and society. Other personal attributes that contribute to a successful career in veterinary medicine are:

A SCIENTIFIC MIND
A student interested in veterinary medicine should have an inquiring mind and keen powers of observation. Aptitude and interest in the biological sciences are important.

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Veterinarians must meet, talk, and work well with a variety of people. Compassion is an essential attribute for success, especially for veterinarians working with owners who form strong bonds with their animals.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
Many environments (e.g., clinical practice, governmental agencies, public health programs) require that veterinarians manage employees and businesses. Having basic managerial and leadership skills contribute to greater success in these work environments.
Approximately two-thirds of veterinarians work in private or corporate clinical practice.