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New AVMA hotline, reputation management service help veterinarians fight back against cyberbullying

(SCHAUMBURG, Illinois)—December 5, 2016 —Two new tools, a cyberbullying hotline and a reputation management service, are now available through the [AVMA's online reputation management resources](#). With 20% of AVMA members reporting they have experienced cyberbullying and false reviews, the House of Delegates (HOD) and Board of Directors (BOD) prioritized adding additional tools to help member veterinarians combat the emotional and financial damage caused by online detractors.

The 24/7 [DVM Cyberbullying Hotline](#) answered by experienced crisis management consultants, is now available to members being cyberbullied and in need of immediate assistance. This service includes 30 minutes of free consultation to AVMA members. Additional consultation time is available at a substantially discounted member rate.

Members also may take advantage of [DVM Reputation Guard](#) through the [AVMA Member Advantage Program](#). DVM Reputation Guard is a subscription-based service that uses extremely powerful analytic tools to gather data from social media, traditional media and other online sources. Results are analyzed to determine the presence of potentially damaging items or

reviews. If a threat is detected, participants are notified immediately, and experts provide them with assistance in developing a response.

“Our veterinarians must be protected from cyberbullying, hacking and false reviews,” said Dr. Tom Meyer, AVMA President. “They not only threaten our livelihood, they damage our sense of wellbeing.”

The AVMA has been addressing cyberbullying in the profession for some time. In response to several high-profile cases of veterinarians being cyberbullied—including a veterinarian who committed suicide after she was severely cyberbullied -- the AVMA published online reputation management resources addressing best practices for preventing online reputation problems, responding to criticism and reviews, and mitigating cyberbullying.

At the urging of their constituents, the AVMA HOD requested the AVMA elevate the priority of providing these resources for members; increase outreach efforts; and consider offering a hotline for AVMA members who are being victimized. In November, the AVMA BOD approved launching a cyberbullying hotline pilot program.

As a result, the AVMA selected [Bernstein Crisis Management, Inc.](#), (BCM) as a partner to provide member veterinarians with both the hotline and world-class reputation preservation services. Bernstein Crisis Management, Inc., is one of the world’s first virtual consultancies to provide 24/7 access to its top executives and a network of carefully screened and highly

experienced crisis management experts. If desired, callers can retain BCM's services, beyond the initial consultation call, for AVMA member-preferred rates. The service can be accessed through the AVMA's cyberbullying resource at <https://www.avma.org/PracticeManagement/Administration/reputation/Pages/cyberbullying.aspx>. Members also can self-register for the reputation guard service at <http://dvmreputationguard.com>.

"We hope these steps will provide all of our members with immediate support to thwart potential negative attacks and start those who already have been victimized on the road to reputation recovery," Meyer said.

For more information, visit [AVMA's online reputation management resources](#) or contact Sharon Granskog, AVMA Assistant Director, Media Relations, at [847-285-6619](tel:847-285-6619) (office), [847-280-1273](tel:847-280-1273) (cell), or sgranskog@avma.org.

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The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world, with more than 88,000 member veterinarians worldwide engaged in a wide variety of professional activities. Visit www.avma.org for more information.