



## Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

1101 Vermont Avenue NW • Suite 301 • Washington, DC 20005-3536

Phone: 202-371-9195 • Fax: 202-842-0773 • www.aavmc.org

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Contact: Charlotte R. Hendrix, X10  
chendrix@aavmc.org

### **Idea Promotes Community Learning “Straight from the Horse’s Mouth”**

Washington, D.C. -- May 16, 2005 -- A veterinary-dentistry team is the first-place interdisciplinary winner in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretary’s Award for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, a national writing competition to promote DHHS’s *Healthy People 2010* and *HealthierUS* initiatives. Student authors representing all of the health professions submitted over 120 papers for the 2004-2005 writing competition. Mr. Mitch Potter, a third-year student at Auburn University’s College of Veterinary Medicine (AUCVM), and Ms. Megan Morgan, a third-year student at the University of Alabama-Birmingham’s School of Dentistry, will split \$7,500 in prize monies for their health promotion proposal, *Straight from the Horse’s Mouth*. DHHS will honor the students and other student winners in the interdisciplinary and single disciplinary categories this summer in Washington, D.C.

*Straight from the Horse’s Mouth* is a community education program designed to promote horse riding safety and dental health among youth. Veterinary and dental students would provide community outreach to those living in rural areas by highlighting the benefits of helmets for young riders and proper veterinary care for their horses, as well as regular dental check ups and regular brushing and flossing. From this non-traditional exposure to veterinarians acting in a public health role, young people in the community may also view veterinary medicine as a potential career opportunity for themselves.

“This is the first veterinary student paper to use horses in a public health promotion project,” said Dr. Charles M. Hendrix, a Professor at Auburn University and the veterinary faculty advisor to the project. “The idea puts an innovative twist on hippotherapy.” For the third year in a row, students at AUCVM have won first-place in either the single or interdisciplinary categories.

Since 1982, the Secretary’s Award for Innovations in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention writing competition has been sponsored by Health Resources and Services Administration’s Bureau of Health Professions in collaboration with the Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP).

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