

Vet Med News

SEPTEMBER 2020

Public Health Program helps beat the forecast in New River Valley

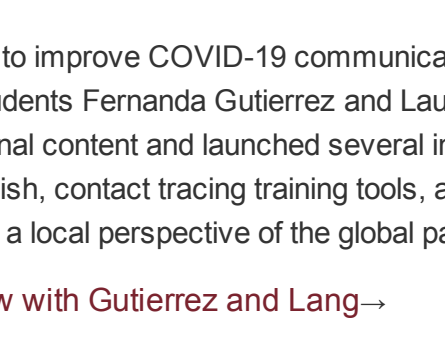


"COVID Crushers" share resources

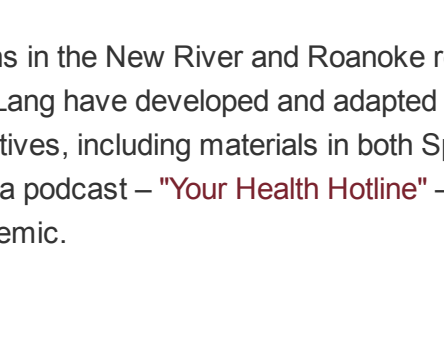
In the fight against COVID-19, the Virginia Tech community is helping the New River Health District far outperform some projections of the virus's spread – and VA-MD Vet Med's Public Health Program remains at the forefront of the charge.

Every Friday night, "COVID Crushers," a group of students in the Public Health Program, set up in downtown Blacksburg and distribute free masks, hand sanitizer, and resources addressing COVID-19.

[Hokies help bend trend in New River Valley→](#)



Fernanda Gutierrez



Laura Lang

Working to improve COVID-19 communications in the New River and Roanoke regions, MPH students Fernanda Gutierrez and Laura Lang have developed and adapted educational content and launched several initiatives, including materials in both Spanish and English, contact tracing training tools, and a podcast – "Your Health Hotline" – that provides a local perspective of the global pandemic.

[Interview with Gutierrez and Lang→](#)

Around the College



Lee testifies at congressional hearing

Department of Population Health Sciences faculty member Lisa M. Lee, Virginia Tech's associate vice president for research and innovation, provided testimony at a Sept. 23 virtual hearing, "Data for Decision-Making: Responsible Management of Data during COVID-19 and Beyond" before the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight.



Wilcke receives lifetime achievement award

Jeff Wilcke, Metcalf Professor of Veterinary Medical Informatics in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, was named the 2020 recipient of the Allen W. Hahn Lifetime Achievement Award in Veterinary Informatics from the Association for Veterinary Informatics. The award honors individuals who have been a leader, educator, and innovator in veterinary informatics. Congratulate Dr. Wilcke on this special [Kudoboard→](#)



NIH grant to develop novel Lyme disease vaccine

Tick immunobiologist Utpal Pal, professor in the Department of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Maryland, is leading a \$3.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop a next-generation Lyme disease vaccine by adapting the rabies vaccine platform to produce antibodies that can protect against *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria responsible for Lyme disease.



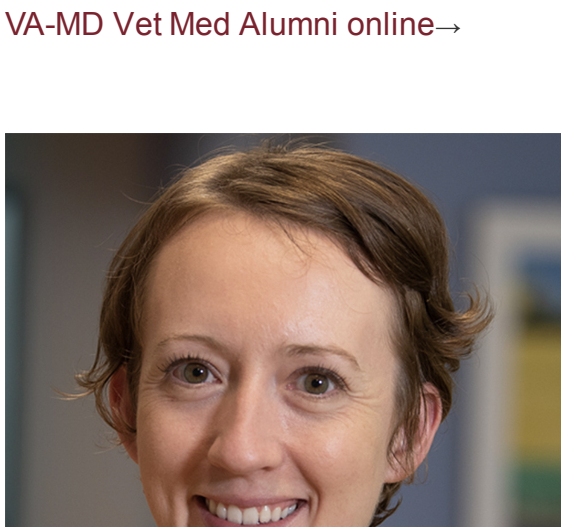
NIH grant to study treatment for metastatic breast tumors

Irving Coy Allen, associate professor of inflammatory disease in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, is collaborating on a National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded project led by Eli Vlaisavljevich, assistant professor of biomedical engineering and mechanics, that aims to develop a novel, noninvasive method combining nanoparticles with ultrasound to selectively target and kill cancerous cells in breast tissue.



Clark-Deener elected vice president of the American College of Theriogenologists

At a virtual annual meeting on July 23, Sherrie Clark-Deener, professor of theriogenology in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, was installed as the vice president of the American College of Theriogenologists. Clark-Deener will serve a one-year term.

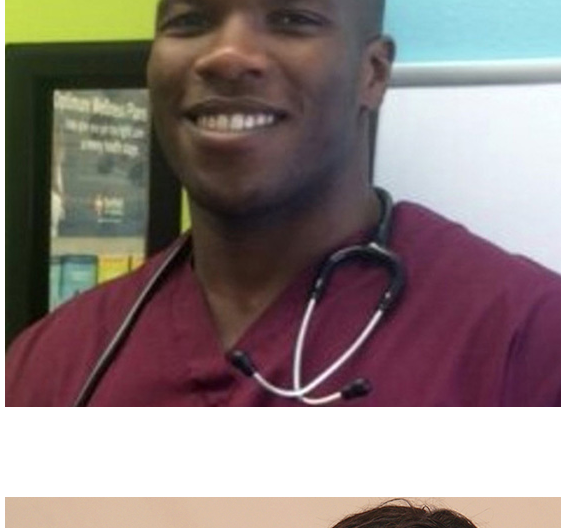


All that and a bag of chips: Virginia Tech employee donates kidney to save co-worker's life

Four years ago, a casual hallway conversation between "work buddies" Brian Huddleston, a support technician on VA-MD Vet Med's IT team, and Heather Parrish, formerly a VA-MD Vet Med administrative assistant who now works at Virginia Tech's Institute for Policy and Governance, led them to embark on a life-transforming journey.

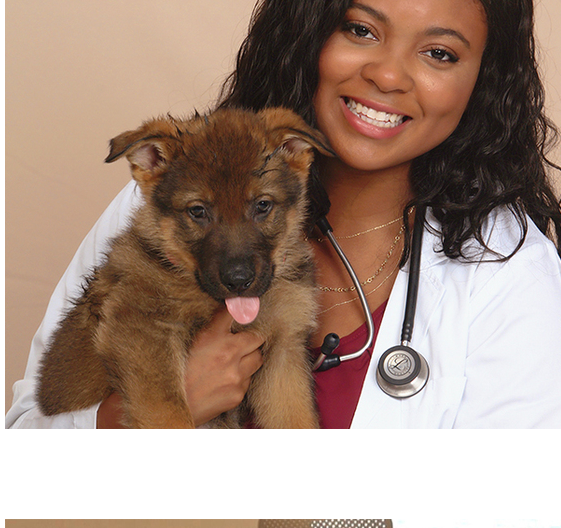
Vet Med Alumni

[VA-MD Vet Med Alumni online→](#)



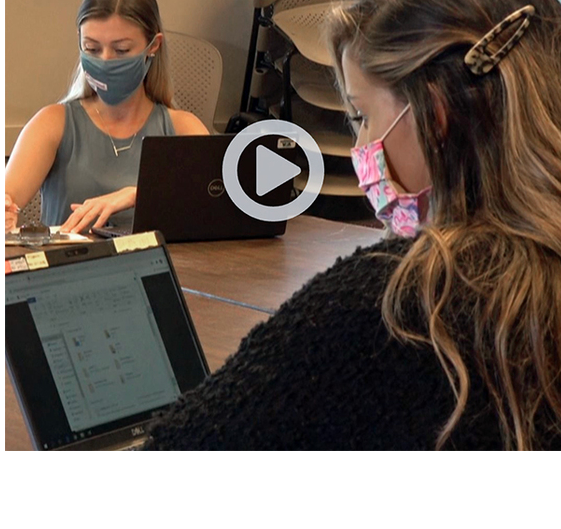
Alumna testifies before Congress

In May, Caitlin Rivers (MPH '13, PhD '15), an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, appeared before the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, urging the federal government to develop a national plan to eliminate test shortages and anticipate bottlenecks in the supply of reagents and materials in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Alumnus featured on 365 Brothers podcast

Landon Collins (DVM '16), a veterinarian at Banfield Pet Hospital in Hawthorne, CA, was interviewed on the Aug. 26 episode, "Landon Collins – My Dog's Doc," of the 365 Brothers podcast. In each episode, a guest reflects on his life, explores the experience of being a Black man in America, shares his interactions with law enforcement, and answers the question: "If America was a woman, what would you say to her?"



Alumna featured on Veterinarian Success Podcast

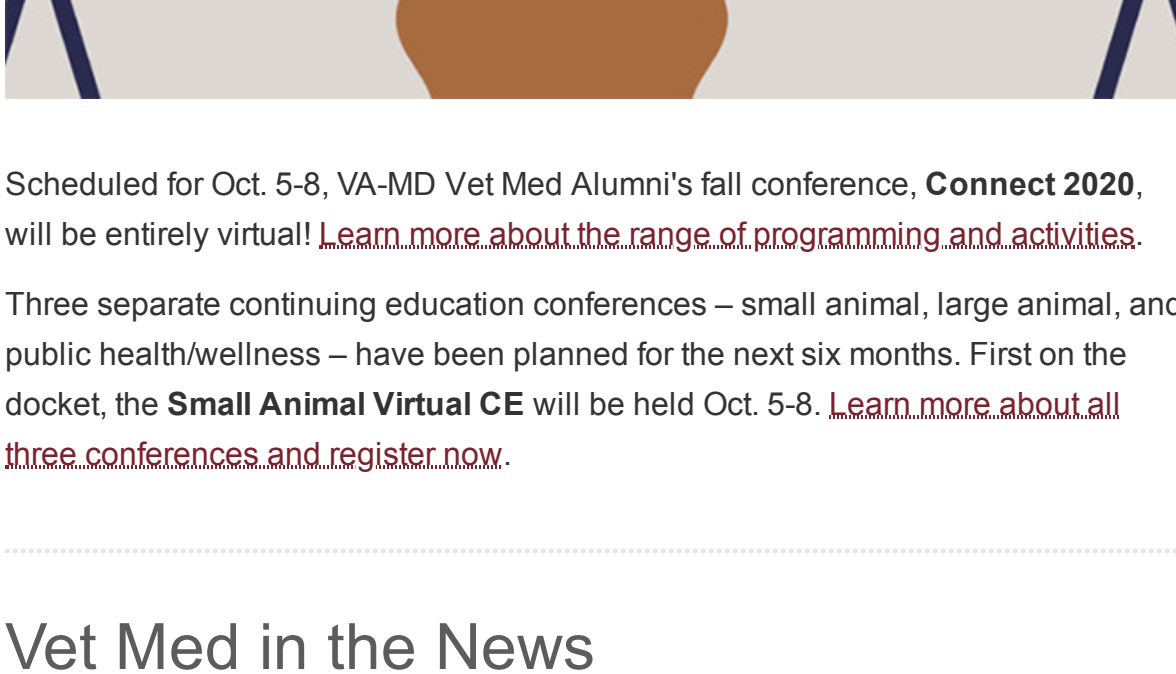
Tierra Price (DVM '20, MPH '20), a community medicine veterinarian in Los Angeles, was featured on the Sept. 27 episode, "Diversity Leads to Growth in Veterinary Medicine," of the Veterinary Success Podcast. In 2018, Price founded BlackDVM Network, a community that connects Black veterinary professionals for mentorship and advancing veterinary medicine.



Public health alumnae explain contact tracing

Mariah Malachi (MPH '18) and Tullia Johnston (MPH '18) are two of the six full-time case investigators with the New River Health District conducting contact tracing, one of the most important tools to combat the spread of COVID-19. Within 24 hours of receiving test results, investigators make contact with the region's residents who have tested positive for the coronavirus.

Upcoming virtual events



Scheduled for Oct. 5-8, VA-MD Vet Med Alumni's fall conference, **Connect 2020**, will be entirely virtual! [Learn more about the range of programming and activities.](#)

Three separate continuing education conferences – small animal, large animal, and public health/wellness – have been planned for the next six months. First on the docket, the **Small Animal Virtual CE** will be held Oct. 5-8. [Learn more about all three conferences and register now.](#)

Vet Med in the News

U.S. medical expert Birx in Blacksburg: Virginia Tech 'understood the need'

THE ROANOKE TIMES

New listings in AVMA Animal Health Studies Database

AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Virginia Tech researcher wins NIH award to study possible treatments for metastatic breast cancer

NEWS MEDICAL LIFE SCIENCES

What DNA tests can – and can't – tell you about equine ancestry

EQUUS

Animal Life Sciences Announces Positive Results in Preliminary Brain Cancer Study for the Treatment of Dogs

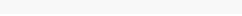
MARKETS INSIDER

GIVE to VA-MD VET MED

Your support helps us advance knowledge, improve health, and save lives.

We're celebrating 40 years!
 VA-MD Vet Med's first class matriculated in 1980.

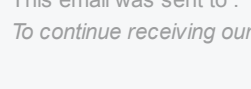
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