

Knowledge: Like a Precious Metal, Is PRICELESS

SILVER ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Speakers, Lecture Titles, and Synopsis/Goals



**2025 Annual Conference (Nov 7th – 9th, 2025)
National University of Health Sciences, Lombard, IL**

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2025 Healing Oasis Conference
Knowledge: Like a Precious Metal, Is PRICELESS

Dates: Nov 7th – 9th, 2025

Location: National University of Health Sciences, 200 E. Roosevelt Rd., Lombard, IL

Hotel of choice: Crowne Plaza Lombard-Downers Grove, 1250 Roosevelt Rd., Lombard, IL. (630-629-6000)

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DEDICATION

This year is a very special one, as we celebrate our **25th YEARLY CONFERENCE Anniversary!** It is our **SILVER ANNIVERSARY!** As in previous years, we dedicate the conference to individuals who have made a difference in our personal and professional lives.

This year, we dedicate this conference to two professionals who have molded several thousand veterinarians through their commitment to education and excellence. A day does not go by that I thank those who provided me with the knowledge that I am sharing with others.

Ronald Hullinger, DVM, PhD, Emeritus Professor, Department of Basic Medical Sciences at Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine.



Kathleen Salisbury, DVM, MS, DACVS-Canine, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Small Animal Surgery Professor at Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine.



Rachel Heart Bellini, DVM, CVSMT
Heart Equine, Rocksprings Texas



Titles:

1. Introduction to Spinal Biomechanics and The Theory of Dural Torque

Synopsis or goals: Optimal equine spinal biomechanics rely on a balance of structural integrity, neuromuscular coordination, and fascial tension. All distortions at the spinal level should be considered holistically through the lens of dural torque theory. This refers to the effects of rotational tension within the dura mater, creating compensatory patterns that alter vertebral alignment, posture, and gait. This can cause havoc on your horse's biomechanics, leading to diagnoses of Kissing spine, SI pain, headshaking, as well as lameness. The focus of this lecture will be on identifying and assessing when this is underlying in your cases.

2. Principles and Practices to Restore Normal Spinal and Hind Limb Biomechanics – I & II

Synopsis or goals: Restoring normal spinal and hind limb biomechanics takes up beyond the world of segmental adjusting into the land of fascia and the brain. Here we will learn how the state of the animal's nervous system informs our approach and dictates the sequence of interventions for long-term results. We will move right into things you can take home and use the very next day, such as the following:

- How to hack into the nervous system and change the muscle pattern of the entire horse.
- Discussion of exercises used for spinal lengthening.
- Discussion of exercises used to address dural torque
- How to use proprioceptive pads to address these issues
- How to release the hock and the deep ventral line

**Lisa Costello, DVM, CVSMT
National Breed Judge for AKC**



Titles:

1. Form follows Function: according to who?

Synopsis and goals: This lecture will look at the conformational differences between different breeds of dogs and within the same breed. Emphasis will be placed on the functional anatomy of breeds bred for purpose and what changes have occurred due to human intervention breeding for the show ring.

Goals of the lecture:

- Understand what is considered “normal” conformation for the breeds presented, utilizing the AKC breed standard and presenting examples of purpose bred dogs vs dogs bred for the show ring
- Look at differences in conformation within a breed and comparison of breeds with different purposes and what human intervention into breeding practices has done to change the conformation of the breed
- Discuss the influence of breed and conformation on posture and dysfunction
- Look at the evolution of breed changes over time

2. Case presentation of IVD rupture in a young Whippet: the importance of providers working together for the best possible outcome

Synopsis and goals: This lecture will present a case report of a young performance Whippet with L7-L8 disc rupture, detailing the diagnostic journey, treatment, and rehabilitation process to achieve the best possible outcome. Detailed information will be presented throughout the course of a year, from the initial injury.

Goals of the lecture:

- Understand the importance of different practitioners working together for both the patient and the client
- Show how the conformational changes in this dog during treatment indicated dysfunction, pain, and improvements during therapy
- Show the importance of understanding basic conformation for a breed to be able to diagnose and treat properly, rather than generically

Gregory Cramer, DC, PhD.
Dean of Research, National Univ. Health Sciences



Title:

Fascia and Its Implications in Manual Therapy II

This presentation will begin with a review the field of fascia science (anatomy, function, and clinical implications). The focus will then turn to anatomic regions of high clinical relevance, identifying changes in the fascia of these regions that result in pain and decreased function. Approaches to treatment will then be discussed. Current and clinical research will also be included throughout the presentation. Fascia and Its Implications in Manual Therapy



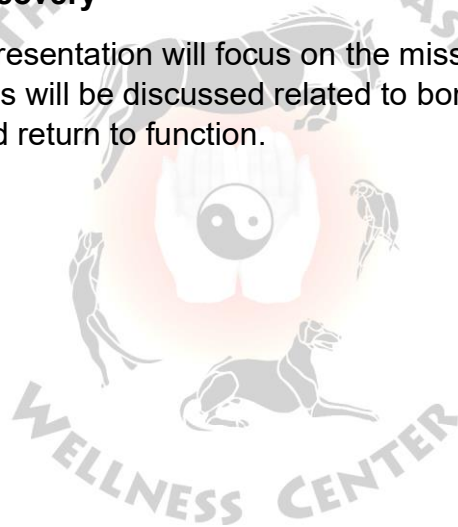
Matt Durham, DVM, DACVSMR
Senior Technical Services Veterinarian, Platinum Performance



Titles:

- 1. Bone: More than Mineral - feeding bone for optimal development, remodeling, and recovery**

Synopsis or goals: This presentation will focus on the missing link between nutrition and performance. Strategies will be discussed related to bone nutrition, its importance to athletic performance, and return to function.



Douglas Gould, PhD, FAAA
Dean of Academic Affairs, Texas A&M, College of Dentistry



Titles:

1. Motor system structural and functional overview

Synopsis or goals: Describe the major components of the motor system – cerebrum, basal ganglia, cerebellum, and thalamic integration. Move into functional convergence, and the coordination of motor planning and execution, and reward-based motor learning. Dysfunction will primarily center on dystonia and lesions of the basal ganglia.

2. Neuroplasticity and motor rehabilitation

Synopsis or goals: Describe mechanisms of neuroplasticity and emphasize goal-directed training, LTP/LTD reorganization in the cortex and basal ganglia. Motor reprogramming and environmental enrichment will be described as retention strategies.

3. Neuroimmune axis and visceral-motor integration

Synopsis or goals: Describe gut-brain circuitry and the enteric nervous system. Neuro-immune crosstalk with an emphasis on sympathetic regulation and vagal stimulation will be presented. Degenerative myelopathy, as related to CNS inflammation and upper motor neuron damage, will be emphasized.

Daniel Halden, DC, PAK, CVMRT, LAc, MAc, Dipl.Ac(NCCAOM)
Program Director, Veterinary Acupuncture Program, Healing Oasis



Titles:

- **Acupuncture as an adjunct for recovery**

Synopsis: With the idea in mind that the fullest, most complete, most enduring recovery is the goal for treatment, acupuncture can add a profound level of treatment in the recovery process. The integration of treatment modalities is often the key to developing the most complete treatment strategy that will serve the patient and their people best. By integrating fundamental concepts of TCM, practitioners can add treatment supports that are different yet complementary to the ideas of biomedicine. The knowledgeable acupuncture practitioner can add support for the injured tissues through their understanding of how those tissues are interpreted in Chinese Medicine. Channels that traverse an injured area can be used to strengthen the area. Point selection distal to the injured area can also support healing in a variety of ways, understood to the acupuncture practitioner. Of course, there is always a benefit to treating underlying issues related to yin/yang, blood/qi, and patterns that support the patient's recovery, approached from a perspective that complements biomedical approaches.

Goals:

- Keep integrative care in mind in designing treatment plans to aid in recovery.
- Treat underlying issues of yin/yang, blood/qi, patterns to support the healing process.
- Use appropriate treatments to address the type of injury, from a TCM point of view.
- Select appropriate local/middle/distal points to support recovery.

- **Interpreting lameness from a TCM point of view**

Synopsis: We are accustomed to assessing lameness from a neuromusculoskeletal point of view. In the terminology of the Healing Oasis, we are in the habit of looking at lameness through the lens of functional neurology. This is an excellent and valuable tool that has no doubt served the practitioner well for many years of practice. If we add additional tools to our assessment, we can expand the treatment options that are available to address the presenting issues. The practice of TCM will also enhance the range of treatment options available for each patient. When assessing a patient for lameness, we should consider local channel changes that may influence the local dynamics of movement. This might be understood as a deficiency or excess (usually some stagnation). Additionally, if we have done our local assessment properly, we can then relate the local issue to a paired global issue or opposite limb correlation. This can frequently lead to very effective treatments.

Goals:

- Understand which movements relate to which local channels.
- Design treatments to tonify deficient channel.
- Design treatments to treat local excess/stagnation.
- Relate local changes to more global considerations, to design the most effective treatment.



Andrea Henderson, DVM, MS, DACVSMR.
Chief of Rehabilitation, Department of Defense Military Working Dog Veterinary Services



Titles:

1. Advancements in Non-Surgical Management of Lumbosacral Disease in Working Dogs

- **Synopsis or goals:** This lecture will focus on the current literature and the presenter's experience in the rehabilitative management of lumbosacral disease in working dogs. Attendees will learn the advantages and pitfalls of the latest surgical methods in the working dog population, and become familiar with observed outcomes and expected prognosis for various non-surgical methods such as extracorporeal shockwave therapy, epidural steroid injection, epidural PRP injection and therapeutic exercise.

2. Don't be Scarred by Fibrotic Contracture and other Myopathies

- **Synopsis or goals:** This lecture will discuss realistic outcomes of novel treatment options for fibrotic hamstring myopathy and other muscle disorders. The physiologic response and mechanisms for the treatment of myopathies will be discussed in more in-depth. Such treatments may include trigger point dry needling, injection of biologics, extracorporeal shockwave therapy, surgical management, and exercises targeted to elicit specific muscle activation.

3. Development of a Foundational Functional Assessment for Military Working Dogs (FFA-MWD): A Tool for Veterinarians and Trainers

- **Synopsis:** This lecture will review the criticality of functional assessments in the reconditioning stage of rehabilitation for canine athletes and introduce an assessment tool that has been initially implemented for the US Military Working Dog population. Attendees will observe the utility of the functional assessment both as a screening tool and as an outcome measure. They will become familiar with applying variations of the FFA-MWD as a capability for veterinarians and handlers.

**Laurie McCauley, DVM, DACVSMR (Canine)
Optimum Pet Vitality**



Titles:

1. Beyond Surgery: Integrative Approaches To Prevention and Treatment of Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease

Synopsis or goals: Did you know that you can tell when there is inflammation in the stifle, months to years before the actual CCL rupture? You can even teach your best clients how to do a simple home test to identify this, way before you can palpate actual effusion. From there, we can discuss eliminating the inflammation and strengthening the structures that support the stifle. If the CCL is already ruptured, learn methods to prevent a second rupture on the contralateral stifle.

2. Degenerative Myelopathy: Beginning to End

Synopsis or goals: Degenerative myelopathy (DM) is a non-painful, fatal disease affecting dogs of many breeds. Yet compensatory pain can be an issue and needs to be addressed. Twenty years ago, we thought dogs that were diagnosed with DM would have 6 to 12 months to live before their quality of life was minimal. Now we are seeing dogs live 3 to 5 years after diagnosis. There are many things we can do to improve the quality of life and lifespan for these pups when we have an early diagnosis and initiate treatment. In this lecture, we will cover early diagnosis as well as multiple areas of treatment, including physical rehabilitation, laser therapy, and other holistic modalities.

3. Therapeutic Exercises For The General Practitioner – Top Exercises

Synopsis or goals: You may not want to be a rehab vet, but you see puppies that are predisposed to hip problems, dogs that are predisposed to back problems, dogs with straight legs that are predisposed to cruciate injuries, and Labradors and other breeds that are predisposed to elbow issues. Wouldn't it be great if you could teach the client an exercise or two to help stabilize the joint, making those issues less of a concern? This will help you enhance your Preventive Medicine skills.

**Kirsten Oliver, VN, Dip.AVN-Surgical, CVT, VTS-Phys.Rehab
The Canine Mechanic Center**



Titles:

- 1. Chain reaction: the role of kinetic lines in chronic posture & fascial tension. 'Ever wonder what a kinetic line is?'**

Synopsis/goals: This presentation will introduce you to kinetic lines & how myofascial tension effects them.

- 2. KT taping: "using tape to aid kinetic lines recover: application techniques & ideas"**

Synopsis/goals:

- 3. Form & function: evaluating body structure & movement. "This presentation will look beyond lameness & examine to understand "how it's made".**

Synopsis/goals:

**Rob van Wessum, DVM, MS, DACVSMR (Equine)
Equine All-Sports Medicine Center, Mason, MI**



Titles:

1. How to improve compliance for rehabilitation

Synopsis/goals: Adherence or compliance is the extent to which an owner of a horse will follow the guidance and instructions of a health care provider. In the case of equine rehabilitation, this refers to the active voluntary involvement of the owner of the horse in the planning and implementation of the treatment and rehabilitation programme. Owner compliance or adherence is a key factor in the rehabilitation of horses, and with some simple tools, veterinarians can enhance compliance (and so overall outcome) enormously.

Goals:

- Recognize the 3 types of non-compliance.
- Find ways to improve compliance
- Discover some simple tools to improve compliance

2. Equine Biomechanics In Dynamic Rehabilitation

Synopsis/goals: Working the horse in specific ways to perform dynamic rehabilitation (as opposite to static rehab, where the horse is standing still while certain (passive) movements as carrot stretches, are executed) is a novel way to incorporate certain biomechanic principles in equine rehab.

Goals:

- Facilitate the use of the horse in a specific way to execute rehab while working the horse in hand or under saddle
- Use biomechanics to mobilize AND strengthen certain anatomical structures

3. The Use of Specific Dressage Exercises In Equine Back Rehabilitation

Synopsis/goals: Certain basic dressage exercises such as circles, serpentines, leg yield, shoulder in, and other lateral movements can be used as additional rehabilitation for many spinal injuries. Proper understanding of the execution of the

dressage exercises and their function in spinal rehab for the prescribing veterinarian as well as for the rider and trainer is essential for a good outcome.

Goals:

- Understanding the specific dressage exercises, how to execute them and when to use them
- Being able to explain the exercises properly to the people which are going to execute them



Rachel Yoquelet, BS, RVT, VTS (ECC), CVMRT
Purdue University – College of Veterinary Medicine
Physical Rehabilitation Department



Title:

1. Physical Rehabilitation for the Critically Ill Patient

- **Synopsis/goals:** In this hour, we will discuss adverse sequelae to hospitalization during critical illness and why early implementation of physical rehabilitation is so important. We will summarize the human and animal literature related to patient care in the intensive care unit (ICU) and the existing research on the positive effects of physical rehabilitation during hospitalization. The goals of this presentation are to raise awareness among veterinary professionals about the clinical impact of hospitalization on ICU patients and to illustrate what physical rehabilitation in a hospital setting entails. We hope that clinicians will collaborate with the physical rehabilitation team to develop a comprehensive care plan that encompasses both inpatient and post-discharge care.

Pedro Luis Rivera, DVM, FACFN, DACVSMR, FCoAC



Titles:

1. Cerebellum: The Little Brain That Gets NO Respect

- **Synopsis/Goals:** This lecture will describe the neuroanatomy and biomechanics of the cervical and cervicothoracic regions. Emphasis will be on how this knowledge is crucial to both canine and equine athletes. The presentation will utilize not only clinically relevant examples but also discuss in depth the clinical relevance of identifying the longitudinal level of the lesion.



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