

The Eighth Annual Irish Veterinary Nursing Association Congress 2017

The IVNA committee is currently in the process of finalising Congress 2017, which will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 27 and 28, 2017, at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Galway, writes Lorraine McDonnell RVN, vice chairperson, IVNA



After the success of last year's congress, we collected all the feedback from evaluation forms filled from the congress and various IVNA events this year. This feedback was the basis for this year's topics. This year, we are once again incorporating elements that will suit both newly qualified and more experienced nurses in practice. A range of international speakers, covering topics on two sides of shock, evidence-based veterinary nursing, acute kidney injury, nutrition in trauma, stress-free Caesarean section and treating wildlife, will present at this year's congress. This year, we are delighted to hold the International Veterinary Nurses and Technicians Association (IVNTA) meeting as part of our congress and also hold a discussion panel where we can exchange ideas and discuss how veterinary nursing is perceived in other countries and how we can progress. In a change to usual format, this year we are opting for a more relaxed social evening with a barbecue, which will include award presentations to honour Veterinary Nurse of the Year, Student Nurse of the Year and Support Staff of the Year.

Also, this year, there is a change to our popular Sunday practical sessions. Due to previous demand for more spaces on the Sunday practicals, we have added another stream, which means there will be three streams running concurrently. Practical sessions this year include critical care patient techniques, practical surgical skills for nurses and patient care plans, ie. the role of the nurse.

You can register now by visiting www.ivna.ie and please keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter pages for the most up-to-date version of the programme. The congress schedule and registration details will also be distributed in the *Veterinary Ireland Journal*. As usual, we will have early-bird rates, which run until March 31.

INTERNATIONAL VETERINARY NURSES AND TECHNICIANS ASSOCIATION

The IVNTA is an association of member countries, which seeks to foster and promote links with veterinary nursing/ technician staff worldwide. The IVNTA aims to raise the international profile of veterinary nurses and technicians and to raise the standard of veterinary nurses and technicians internationally.

The IVNTA:

- Maintains contact with veterinary nurse and technician associations around the world, and maintains an up-to-date list of members;
- Keeps members informed regarding relevant information and events;
- Maintains regular communication with members and provides a channel of open communication for members; and
- Offers help and advice to enquirers.

THE IVNA AWARDS 2017

Nominations for the 2017 IVNA Awards, sponsored by Royal Canin, Allianz and Bayer, will officially open on February 14. The IVNA Awards are presented each year to three exceptional individuals, who go above and beyond the call of duty for their patients and pet owners. The awards are to acknowledge outstanding efforts made by veterinary nurses, student veterinary nurses and veterinary support staff. Any member of the public or of the profession may nominate a candidate who they feel has gone over and above the call of duty, whether it be to assist an animal, a client or a member of the practice team. Six nominees will be selected from each category from all the entries received until April 30 and the winner will be selected from these six



Lisa Joyce, IVNA chairperson; Catherine Hartin, 2016 winner of IVNA Nurse of the Year; and Margarett Tracey, Royal Canin. Photo: Eithne O'Brien.

finalists. The winners will all receive fantastic holiday gift vouchers and a trophy will be presented in all categories. The nominator of the winner in each category will also receive a voucher for €50. The awards will be presented at the Annual IVNA Congress.

Catherine's winning nomination from a client last year is as follows: "There is no veterinary nurse quite like Catherine. She's exceptionally knowledgeable, incredibly professional, but above all, she's kind, sympathetic, and understanding. Any animal who arrives through the door at Briarhill Veterinary Clinic will be greeted by Catherine, and other non-human family members will be enquired after. Catherine never forgets a visitor to the clinic, and they don't forget her.

"Taking time to greet them may seem trivial, but, in fact, Catherine is an 'animal person' and she manages to soothe the patients and comfort them as soon as they arrive into what is often a frightening place for them. My dog now wags her tail on entering the clinic and encountering Catherine's friendly greeting, where in another practice she used to tremble with fear.

"Catherine also manages to remember, and delight in, each animal's particular personality traits, and this makes for highly individualised, personal care. I have said of Catherine before that I genuinely feel that she cares about the animals as individuals, as you would expect her to care about her own companions.

"Not only does she have a way with non-humans, though, she is also exceptionally good at dealing with their carers. Incredibly patient and utterly dedicated to the animals in her care, she will take time to answer any questions that are asked of her, and she has helped to allay my anxieties about leaving animals in for treatment.

"Catherine is also an educator. She has given me and others extremely good advice on caring for the animals who live with us; she knows about the possible causes to behavioural problems and how to avoid them. It is down to her advice and support that a five-week-old kitten who had been dumped in my garden is now a thriving adult.

"Recently, our dear cat, Harriet, was diagnosed with an aggressive lymphoma. Catherine helped to care for her from the moment she was picked up as a stray until she passed. With every phonecall or visit I made, Catherine took the time to ask questions whose answers I would never have

thought of offering, but which turned out to be important. When we finally sent Harriet off to her long sleep, Catherine was there and her words of comfort and kindness to me will never be forgotten. Catherine is everything a veterinary nurse should be – her dedication to her work and to the animals under her care is second-to-none.

"She handles the animals in stressful situations with minimal stress to them, and she is attuned to the different needs that their individual personalities require (whether knowing that sensitive Áine would need to be kept in isolation, kissing terrified Harriet on the head to soothe her, or effusively praising happy Cassie to distract her from whatever injections are being given). I fight back tears when I think of how gently and sensitively she dealt with me when my heart broke over Harriet's death, and how she organised the cremation with such ease. For Catherine, veterinary nursing is more than a job; it's a vocation, and it's clear how much she loves both it and her animal patients, who love her in return."

You will find your practice IVNA Awards poster enclosed with this edition of the *Veterinary Ireland Journal*. We often hear that members of the public are not aware of the tasks veterinary nurses can undertake and what the role involves, so this is your chance to highlight the profession!

We are asking you to make a display incorporating your poster to show what a veterinary nurse does.

Please post images to our Facebook page or email to pro@ivna.ie and the winning display will receive a free Saturday attendance to the IVNA Congress in May.

Our three main sponsors (Royal Canin, Allianz and Bayer) have donated three €100 vouchers, which will be awarded at random to a person who has liked and shared the poster image we have added to our Facebook page – this is to encourage members of the public to share the image and again to raise the profile of veterinary nursing among the general public.

IVNA CHARITY OF THE YEAR



IVNA asked our members to vote on a charity for us to support this year and the charity that was chosen this year was Great Hounds In Need Ireland. Great Hounds in Need was established in Ireland to focus on the rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming of greyhounds and lurchers.

They also aim to show people what great pets they make and what amazing creatures they are through education and the support of adoptive families in the post-adoption period. All their adult hounds are neutered prior to adoption, every dog is microchipped and vaccinated and those going to homes in continental Europe are also vaccinated against rabies and carry an EU pet passport.