



Federal Veterinarian

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REMINDER

**Members,
Our new website has tons of
information for you on:**

- **Upcoming CE**
- **Financial wellness**
- **Latest news**
- **Legislation tracking**
- **New Legal Service**

**To make sure you're getting
the most out of your
membership, make sure that
you have access to our
member-only portal on our
site. You'll be able to access
the information listed**

NAFV ACCOUNT SIGN-IN

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2- Bird Flu Outbreak In Mink Sparks Concern About Spread In People

Page 3- NAFV in AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference

Page 4 - How Agencies Trying To Keep Early-Career Employees In Federal Jobs

- Does SARS-CoV-2 Transmit From Humans to Their Pets?

Page 5 - APHIS Associate Administrator Discusses American Rescue Plan Research for SARS-CoV-2 in Animals

- Artificial Insemination as an Alternative Transmission Route for African Swine Fever Virus

The Role of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians on Members Morale

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) measures employee engagement and satisfaction with their workplaces, or in other words morale. The FEVS serves as a tool for employees to share their perceptions in many critical areas including their work experiences, their agency, and their leadership.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and its Office of Employee Experience (OEX) use the results of FEVS to inform efforts and the initiatives currently underway with the "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" ranking according to the Partnership for Public Service on employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale—all of which support and inform USDA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's FY2022 priority to "Make USDA a Best Place to Work."

And this is where an association such as the National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV) can come in.

Today's veterinarians are the only doctors educated to protect the health of both animals and people. These dedicated professionals apply their medical skills not in "private practice" but in "public practice" in the service of every American through the many programs administered by the federal government. Though federal veterinarians touch the lives of every American every day, many feel undercompensated, underappreciated, and overworked. These feelings can contribute to high employee turnover rates, which impact overall morale of the team, the health and wellness of Americans, and the agency's bottom line. Many times, there are significant gaps between the perceptions of an agency's executive leadership and the realities of mid-level management. This can be even

Key Points:

PSLF Summary of Changes

New Rules for Qualifying Payments

Which PSLF Requirements are Waived

How to Find Out if You Qualify for Additional Payments

Next Steps: How to See if You Qualify

Q & As

worse when including agencies rank and file grassroots employees. The majority of NAFV members (and most of the veterinarians employed by the federal government) work for the USDA. The results of FEVS indicated that morale is USDA is low, ranked 16 of 17 large federal agencies, only slightly better than the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). When you look at the sub-agency rankings our major membership comes from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (ranked 298 out of 411) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (ranked 294 out of 411).

For those working there, this may not come as a surprise. But, how can these agencies benefit from working with NAFV, as an association of managers and supervisors? There are finer points of job satisfaction that the FEVS cannot measure. The impact of mandatory deployments on people's job satisfaction, for example. When that

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Executive Vice President
National Association of
Federal Veterinarians
1910 Sunderland Pl., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-1608

Any veterinarian employed full time by the federal government may become an active member. Dues are \$260.00 annually, payable annually, semiannually, PayPal (annually or monthly), or by federal payroll deductions (eligibility for payroll deduction is limited to USDA veterinarians --of \$10.00 authorized by signing USDA Form AD 1054 (FSIS) or SF 1187 (APHIS)). Uniformed veterinarians' dues are \$160.00 annually. Active-duty uniformed veterinarians- please contact the NAFV office. Associate membership is granted to active members when they retire from federal service. Associate members pay no dues. Associate members receive the NAFV newsletter by email.

The National Association of Federal Veterinarians is a non-profit corporation and the purposes for which it is formed are to promote the veterinary profession, to improve the professional efficiency and material interests of the members, to acquaint the public with the activities of veterinarians in the federal service, and to cooperate with the American Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Animal Health Association and other similar groups with common interests.

Editor: NAFV Newsletter Committee
nafv@nafv.org

Send address changes to:
Federal Veterinarian
1910 Sunderland Pl., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-1608
Tel: (202) 223-4878 | Fax: (202) 842-4360
Email: nafv@nafv.org
Website: www.nafv.org

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deployment is seen as furthering the mission of the agency, it can be a positive motivating factor; however, if that mandatory deployment is seen as making up for an agencies failure to fill critical vacancies, it has just the opposite effect on morale.

When deployments are viewed as on people's job satisfaction, for example. When that deployment is seen as furthering the mission of the agency, it can be a positive motivating factor; however, if that mandatory deployment is seen as making up for an agencies failure to fill critical vacancies, it has just the opposite effect on morale. When deployments are viewed as employed

where certain individuals seem to be exempt from deployment, then it can destroy the sense of accomplishment. This level of detail can't be reached by the FEVS, but through consultations with our members and executive leadership these insights can be addressed. In many cases, just hearing a third party explain the situation can make all the difference in how the issue is perceived.

In service of these public servants, the NAFV strives to serve both veterinarians and the agencies they work for by facilitating communication, making suggestions for improvements, and working collaboratively to address issues of concern.

This advocacy includes emphasizing professionalism and expertise in federal service, but also promoting continuing education, teamwork and morale, and a standard of excellence. NAFV can work with you to improve it and your professional working environment.

NAFV can approach senior leadership in the department with your concerns and possible solutions not as a union but as an organization that represent you medical / scientific professionals.

Our goal is to enhance the productivity and impact of your work life, which instills a positive sense of accomplishment. When a veterinarian is lifted, that positively reflects the team, and that morale boost translates into increased productivity and pride in your work which makes all the difference.

Bird Flu Outbreak In Mink Sparks Concern About Spread In People



A variant of H5N1 influenza that can spread between mammals could pose an increased risk to people and wild animals. An outbreak of avian influenza on a mink farm in Spain provides the strongest evidence so far that the H5N1 strain of flu can spread from one infected mammal to another.

The outbreak of H5N1 flu, described in a report in Eurosurveillance on 19 January, occurred on an American mink (*Neovison vison*) farm in Carral in October 2022. Genetic sequencing showed that the animals were infected with a new variant of H5N1, which includes genetic material from a strain found in gulls, as well as a genetic change known to increase the ability of some animal-flu viruses to reproduce in mammals. The new variant puts bird flu in "uncharted territory", says Wendy Puryear, a virologist at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. Researchers have warned that, without careful precautions, the disease might eventually spread among people.

During the first week of October 2022, workers on the affected mink farm noticed that the mink's mortality rate had increased from a baseline of 0.25% per week to 0.77%, prompting tests on the affected animals for the H5N1 and SARS-CoV-2 viruses. The animals tested positive for H5N1. Then the animals fell sick, and the disease seemed to spread from 'hotspots' of between two and four pens, in which all animals became infected and died.

AVMA VETERINARY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



Resolutions that may be of interest to NAFV Members:

Resolution 1 on companion animals is being discussed with USDA, APHIS, Animal care staff. All were in general agreement but wanted clarification on some language to include all animals, more specifics of negative attributes, etc.

Resolution 3 on unregulated horse racing mentions requiring a Category II USDA accredited veterinarians rather than just a licenses veterinarian.

Resolution 5 on aquatic animal medicine and overflight entities including federal oversight and regulated entities. USDA APHIS has brought up that they have received funding for this area but the amount they receive is not under their control and what they can do may be limited.

Resolution 6 on veterinary compounding has references to FDA, CVM and their regulations under CVM GF! #256 on food animal residue avoidance database.

Resolution 7 stresses the importance of veterinarians in food safety. It has 3 specific items pointing out all slaughter plants must be under direct supervision of a Supervisory Public Health Veterinarians, incentives for SPHV's should have improved remuneration and incentives and funding for continuing education.

AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference (VLC) January 5-7, 2023



Chief Veterinarian of Ukraine attended the VLC to thank AVMA for their help and support to rescue zoo animals and pets in the war zones.

How Agencies Are Trying To Keep Early-Career Employees In Federal Jobs



With millennial and Generation Z employees projected to comprise a large portion of the U.S. workforce by 2025, the Office of Personnel Management is pushing forward on more incentives to recruit and retain early-career federal employees.

It's particularly important right now, said OPM Director Kiran Ahuja, because of the current imbalance in how many early-career employees there are in the federal workforce, versus the nationwide workforce.

"We track much lower than the private sector by a wide margin," Ahuja said at a National Academy of Public Administration event on Nov. 2.

"Attracting early career talent is a priority for me. It is a priority for the President's Management Council. It's a central part of the President's Management Agenda."

Without comprehensive federal workforce reform, there are still some ways agencies can make changes for hiring and recruitment practices. For example, OPM added two new hiring authorities last year — the post-secondary hiring authority and the recent graduate hiring authority. Ahuja also said OPM plans to help agencies use ideas from expedited hiring projects, such as the six-month hiring spree under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, in their internal recruitment processes.

Federal internships are another instance of how OPM is trying to help agencies get early-career employees in the door. For fiscal 2023, the Biden

administration set a goal to hire 35,000 federal interns. It's a number of interns that the federal government has achieved before, back in 2010. But more recently, the number of federal internships has plummeted. A central part of the Biden administration's goal for this coming year also involves expanding paid internship opportunities.

"Interestingly enough, [paid internships are] a novel concept here in Washington, D.C., and the federal government, but this is tied to our diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility agenda," Ahuja said. Other programs aiming to recruit early-career workers are also gaining traction. In one example, the Presidential Management Fellowship program, a two-year federal program for graduate students, just broke a record with 10,000 applications this year.

But early-career hiring will only become a more pressing issue for the federal workforce over time. Right now, less than 7% of the federal workforce is under the age of 30. Gen Z employees, those ages 25 and under, make up about 1.6% of the federal workforce. That's compared with the same age group comprising 9.1% of the nationwide workforce, according to Paul Pietsch, the Partnership for Public Service's senior manager for federal workforce research. Other programs aiming to recruit early-career workers are also gaining traction. In one example, the Presidential Management Fellowship program, a two-year federal program for graduate students, just broke a record with 10,000 applications this year.

"There is an imbalance there," Pietsch said at a FedInsider event on Nov. 8. "This really underscores that the federal government needs to do a better job getting younger people into government, getting them excited about public service, and providing them the resources, motivation and support to keep them in government."

Many Gen Z employees only joined the workforce after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which drastically increased telework and remote work in the U.S. As a result, many early-career employees see hybrid work or remote work as the baseline for an employer.

Does SARS-CoV-2 Transmit From Humans to Their Pets?



A recent study attempted to estimate the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from humans to their pets and identify the risk factors, including food and water bowls and human-animal contact.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists have believed that SARS-CoV-2 likely jumped from a mammal source to humans. However, it is still unclear how human and animal interaction frequency affects transmission. So, what about humans with their pets? Should they be concerned? Does the virus transmit to their human owners from cats, dogs, hamsters, and other pets?

A study titled "Household Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from Humans to Pets, Washington and Idaho, USA" was recently published in the *Emerging Infectious Diseases* journal. That presents the results of a cross-sectional, One Health study of the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from pets to their humans. The study also described types of human-animal contact and risk factors for household transmission.

The study's investigators wrote that even though the virus spreads from individual to individual now, in the United States, 110 domestic cats and 95 domestic dogs had been reported by the US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to have SARS-CoV-2 infection as of October 17, 2022.

The authors noted that "the results indicate that household transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from humans to animals occurs frequently, and infected animals commonly display signs of illness.

Federal Veterinarian

We furthermore show that close human-animal contact is common among persons and their pets in this study population, and this contact appears to enable SARS-CoV-2 transmission. That pet owners are familiar with and willing to adopt measures to protect their pets from COVID-19.” The study was conducted as a community-based study of pets in households with more than 1 confirmed human SARS-CoV-2 infection. Two study personnel, including at least 1 veterinarian, performed the samplings in the participant’s home or at a local veterinary hospital. The study personnel did not use muzzles, nor did they use chemical restraint because of biosafety concerns.

Clinical signs consistent with SARS-CoV-2 among 119 dogs and 57 cats were reported for 20 dogs (21%) and 19 cats (39%). The investigators noted that of 81 dogs and 32 cats sampled, 40% of dogs and 43% of cats tested seropositive, and 5% of dogs and 8% of cats were polymerase chain reaction (PCR) positive. The authors said delays in sampling could cause this discordance. The respondents commonly reported close human-animal contact and were willing to take measures to prevent the virus’s transmission to their pets. However, the reported preventive measures showed a slightly protective but nonsignificant movement for both illness and seropositivity in pets. In particular, “sharing of beds and bowls had slight harmful effects, reaching statistical significance for sharing bowls and seropositivity,” the authors noted.

“Our study contributes useful and novel findings to the literature on cross-species transmission of SARS-CoV-2, with relevance to other zoonoses transmitted in a household setting,” the authors wrote in the study. “In particular, our findings indicate households in this population are willing to adopt measures to protect their pets from SARS-CoV-2 infection and that these measures might be effective, indicating an opportunity to prevent household transmission of zoonoses through health education and policy.”

The prevalence of virus-positive animals was greater than 90% in multi-pet households with greater than or equal to 1 positive pet.

APHIS Associate Administrator Discusses American Rescue Plan Research for SARS-CoV-2 in Animals



Dr. Mike Watson, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Associate Administrator, discussed the research taking place under the American Rescue Plan for SARS-CoV-2, in partnership with the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), on USDA Radio.

“Ultimately, the tools and knowledge we gain from this work on SARS-CoV-2 will strengthen the nation’s ability to respond to whatever the next disease is threatening animals, and possibly humans,” said Watson. “Our collaboration with ARS is just a handful of the 17 projects we are currently conducting under the American Rescue Plan Act.”

In 2021, USDA received \$300 million in funding under the American Rescue Plan Act. APHIS is leveraging that funding to meet Congress’ charge to conduct monitoring and surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in susceptible animals. APHIS is uniquely positioned for this because of our scientific expertise in animal health and animal diseases, including preparing for and responding to foreign animal disease outbreaks. The work being completed under the American Rescue Plan Act is aimed at understanding how the SARS-CoV-2 virus behaves in different animals, how it moves between animals and people and what we can do to interrupt the chain of transmission. It is targeting a wide range of animal groups for surveillance and to test for susceptibility including farmed animals, such as mink, companion animals like cats and dogs, free-ranging wildlife such as white-tailed deer, and animals in human care such as animals housed in zoos, aquariums and animal rehabilitation centers.

Artificial Insemination as an Alternative Transmission Route for African Swine Fever Virus



The rapid spread of the African swine fever virus (ASFV), causing severe disease with often high fatality rates in Eurasian suids, prevails as a threat to pig populations and dependent industries worldwide. Although advancing scientific progress continually enhances our understanding of ASFV pathogenesis, alternative transmission routes for ASFV have yet to be assessed. Here, we demonstrate that ASFV can efficiently be transferred from infected boars to naïve recipient gilts through artificial insemination (AI).

In modern pig production, semen from boar studs often supplies many sow herds. Thus, the infection of a boar stud presents the risk of rapidly and widely distributing ASFV within or between countries. Daily blood and semen collection from four boars after intramuscular inoculation with ASFV strain ‘Estonia 2014’ resulted in the detection of ASFV genomes in the semen as early as 2 dpi, in blood at 1 dpi while semen quality remained largely unaffected. Ultimately, after insemination with extended semen, 7 of 14 gilts were ASFV positive by 7 days post insemination, and all gilts were ASFV positive by 35 days post insemination. Twelve out of 13 pregnant gilts aborted or resorbed at the onset of fever. A proportion of fetuses originating from the remaining gilt showed both abnormalities and replication of ASFV in fetal tissues.

Thus, we present evidence for the efficient transmission of ASFV to gilts via AI and also to implanted embryos. These results underline the critical role that boar semen could play in ASFV transmission.

As the etiological agent of African swine fever (ASF), a notifiable disease resulting in high fatality rates in Eurasian suids, the ASFV pandemic remains a threat to global pig populations and economies [1]. Originally, ASFV was endemic in sub-Saharan Africa, where it circulated in warthog and soft tick (genus: *Ornithodoros*) populations [2].

However, ASFV was introduced in Georgia in 2007; an event that initiated the pandemic spread of ASFV over the last 15 years. Numerous studies on the effects of socio-economic factors on ASFV spread were conducted in Sardinia [3]—a country on the brink of ASF eradication after decades of fighting the disease, with the last registered case in 2018 [4]. Despite progress in understanding and controlling the disease, the ongoing spread emphasizes the necessity of expanding our knowledge of drivers of disease dynamics, such as alternative transmission routes.

In this study, we investigated venereal transmission of ASFV from infected boars to female recipients. The contemporary pig industry relies on AI to optimize reproduction and produce high-quality progeny [5]. The semen used in AI often originates from boar studs, distributing 3 billion spermatozoa/dose/sow from high-health boars selected for their genetic potential [6]. This enables the insemination of many females without the need for each individual farm to purchase, house, and feed their own boars. Notably, more than 90% of all breeding sows are inseminated artificially in many countries [7], which emphasizes the potential for the venereal transmission of ASFV. At boar studs, semen is collected and distributed, often nationwide or across borders, via same-day or next-day delivery.

Since boar semen can act as an efficient transmission agent for a variety of viral diseases, e.g., pseudorabies virus (PRV [8]), foot-and-mouth disease virus (FMDV [9]), porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV [10]), swine vesicular disease virus (SVDV [9]), porcine parvovirus (PPV [11]), porcine picornaviruses [9], and possibly ASFV, comprehensive insight into the involvement of boar semen in ASFV transmission is essential.

- Daily blood and semen from the four boars was collected after intramuscular inoculation with ASFV strain

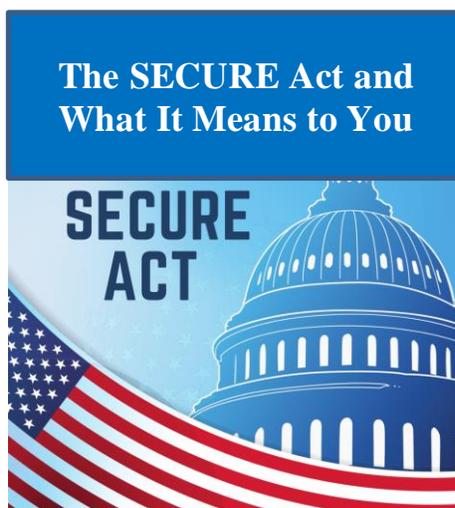
- Virus was found in semen samples as early as 2 days after inoculation while semen quality remained largely unaffected

- 7 of 14 gilts tested ASFV positive by 7 days post-insemination; all 14 gilts were ASFV positive by 35 days post-insemination

- 12 out of 13 pregnant gilts aborted or resorbed at the onset of fever

- A proportion of fetuses originating from the remaining gilt showed both abnormalities and replication of ASFV in fetal tissues

[You can read more here:](#)



A new law that went into effect this year makes significant changes to retirement planning strategies.

The Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act will have a significant impact on a large part of the population and will cause people to rethink and replan their retirement and estate planning strategies. The main takeaway is that proper financial planning has to be done in advance, and failing to plan properly can cause people inheriting money to be met with some very large tax burdens.

There are some notable changes that may have an immediate effect on some of you. I strongly urge you take some time to understand the changes that will impact your money and the money you leave behind to your beneficiaries. Some of the major changes and how they work, along with some practical techniques that we will be working on with our clients in order to plan properly and reduce the impact of this new law on their finances.

Contributing to IRAs past age 70½

The SECURE Act repeals the prohibition on contributions to a traditional IRA by an individual who is 70½.

Increased Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) ages

Currently, the age at which you are required to take distributions from your retirement accounts like IRA, TSP, 401K, etc., is when you are 70½ (with a couple exceptions, for another article). The SECURE Act changes this age to 72 for individuals who turn 70½ after 2019. If you turned 70½ in 2019 and took an RMD, you fall under the old rules and are still required to continue taking the distributions.

Wealth transfer opportunities and new financial planning techniques. The SECURE Act has also created some interesting financial planning opportunities for families. Effective long-term planning requires people to think about both their lifetime income needs in retirement and also what they want to leave behind to their heirs.

The SECURE Act offers provisions that allow a handful of wealth planning techniques to be utilized in order to maximize your wealth transfer success and reduce your tax liabilities.

One of the most notable changes going forward as mentioned earlier, is the reduction in the amount of time that a person will have to fully liquidate an inherited IRA. Inheritors will no longer have the same level of efficiency with their inheritance and will have less flexibility.

[You can read more here:](#)

Federal Veterinarians - Are You Prepared?



As you know, Federal Veterinarians are critical in ensuring the nation's food safety and animal/livestock health with innumerable food safety initiatives, guidelines through FSIS, APHIS, DHS, CDC, and FDA, and various animal health programs. Many federal veterinarians also have the dual role of a manager, supervisor or officer within their respective agency. **This leaves you extremely susceptible to allegations, complaints, or potential lawsuits- just for doing your job.** Are you emotionally, financially and legally prepared to become the subject of an adverse administrative action, disciplinary proceeding, or civil lawsuit?

The following is based off a real claims scenario from a federal veterinarian

Picture this: You are the subject of an Internal Controls Staff investigation of employee accountability for the unsanitary conditions found at one of the meat processing plants you supervise, which had its operations suspended and resulted in the agency recalling over 50,000 lbs. of meat. The findings of the investigation lead the agency to propose your removal from federal service based on a charge of neglect of duty, alleging that you failed to perform your regulatory and supervisory duties at the meat processing plant. While you argue that your actions were consistent with sanitation guidelines, the agency maintains its position and issues a final decision to sustain that charge. You are forced to appeal and litigate your removal before the Merit Systems Protection Board, or risk losing your livelihood.

WITHOUT FEDS PROTECTION

You spend months paying out enormous fees to expensive federal employment attorneys in an attempt to defend yourself against the charges. The stress of the unknown begins to take a toll on your personal life, and as your savings begin to dwindle, you are forced to make the difficult decision to resign from federal employment in the best interest of your family's needs and finances and must begin looking for a new career.

WITH FEDS PROTECTION

You are assigned your own personal attorney specializing in federal employment law and MSPB appeals, paid for entirely by your PLI policy. Although it still takes months, your attorney handles all of the stressful paperwork and procedures, and succeeds in winning the appeal. You continue to be gainfully employed by your federal agency without loss in pay or grade.

The bottom line is, allegations are unsettling. If one is made against you - whether it comes from plant workers, special interest groups, politicians, members of the public, co-workers, subordinates or managers - the challenge is having the necessary finances and expertise to defend yourself successfully. FEDS Professional Liability Insurance provides you with both legal defense and indemnity protection against allegations arising from your federal position, so you can do your job with peace.

FEDS Protection is Affordable

\$1,000,000 Policy Limit; \$280 Annual Premium*

\$2,000,000 Policy Limit; \$380 Annual Premium*

50% Agency Reimbursement

All managers & supervisors are eligible for up to 50% agency reimbursement for a net cost of only \$140 per year.

***You must enter discount code "NAFV" for this pricing.**

Surplus lines taxes apply.

Your FEDS policy must be in place prior to any allegations or complaints in order for coverage to apply, so don't delay.

Enroll Today at www.fedsprotection.com or call 866.955.FEDS.

Active Members We Have Lost Touch With

We have lost touch with the following list of members. If you know them, please prompt them to reach out to us at 202-223-4878.

- Renee Chicoine
- Robert Cook
- Charles Edwards
- Leonard Jr. Eldridge
- Delorias Lenard
- Clara Ann Ponce
- DonaldRandall
- Fredrick Lengemann, Jr
- Kathleen Akin
- Thomas Gidlewski
- AllisonSiu
- Donna Malloy
- Daniel Novilla
- Antonio Arroyave
- Anne Scully
- Ann Walker
- Lauren Ferebee
- Elizabeth Kim
- Meghan Jessee
- Elizabeth Kim
- Julie Sinclair
- Anita Scott Wilson