



Veterinary Innovation Summit 2024: Keynote speakers highlight the future of veterinary medicine

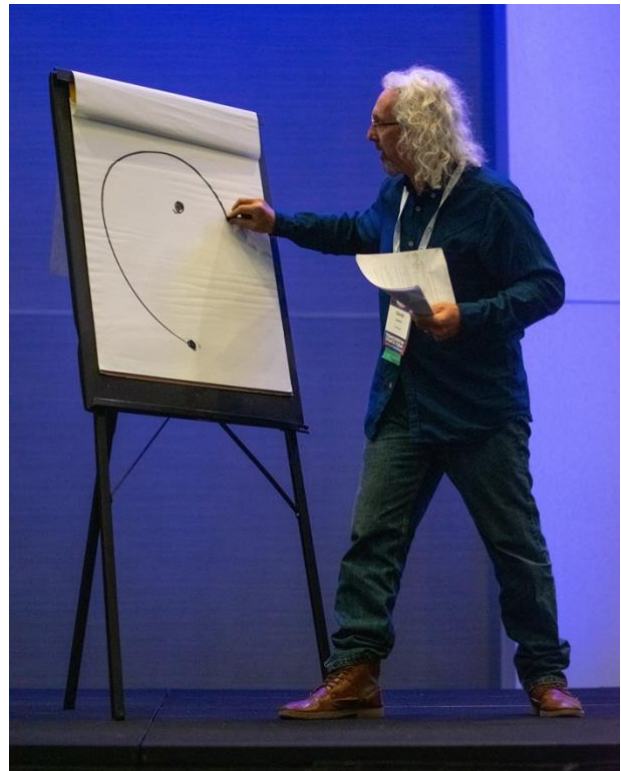
By the [S&A Content Team](#)

Kansas City, MO, Aug. 26, 2024—The 2024 Veterinary Innovation Summit, held August 21-23 in downtown Kansas City, brought together industry leaders to discuss the future of veterinary medicine with the theme “Tomorrow Starts Today.” The event’s keynote presentations delivered an abundant dose of inspiration and explored cutting-edge technologies, leadership strategies, and the evolving role of veterinary professionals.

Technologies of the Imagination

Dave Zaboski, a Disney animator whose credits include *Pocahontas*, kicked off the summit with a session on the power of creative storytelling and its role in innovation. Zaboski, who sketched his way through the talk illustrating his key points, emphasized the importance of embracing chaos and uncertainty in the creative process.

“Instead of fearing new developments, ask yourself, ‘What if it went well?’” Zaboski said, highlighting the shift from the hero’s journey (isolated individual) to the “kindred quest” (collaborative community) as a new narrative framework. He also stressed the value of sober analysis, acknowledgment and celebration at the end of any creative endeavor.



Dave Zaboski presents his keynote address, “Technologies of the Imagination,” during the 2024 Veterinary Innovation Summit.

Innovations on the Horizon

Dr. Indu Subaiya, a pioneer in healthcare innovation, focused on the transformative potential of emerging technologies in veterinary medicine. She pointed to the growing role of telehealth, artificial intelligence and smart devices in addressing the veterinary workforce shortage and enhancing patient care.

“Artificial empathy is coming. Are we ready for emotions from AI?” Subaiya asked, underscoring the impending impact of generative AI on both human and veterinary healthcare. She also

discussed the “flipped stack” healthcare model, where technology serves as the foundation for service delivery and care, rather than being an add-on.

The Patient-Led Revolution

Susannah Fox, a former Pew Research executive and healthcare innovator, shared insights on the patient-led revolution in health care. Drawing on her research, Fox highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer healthcare, particularly for those whose needs are often invisible or unmet.

“I want regular people to know they can step into their power,” Fox said. She urged veterinarians and industry leaders to listen to and learn from their clients to better address their needs.

Leading with Grit and Resilience

The summit concluded with a powerful presentation by retired colonel and leadership expert Pilar McDermott, PhD. Drawing on her experiences at West Point, McDermott discussed the importance of grit, resilience and hard conversations in leadership.

“Good leadership changed my life,” McDermott said, emphasizing that true leadership involves building trust through character, competence and commitment. McDermott challenged attendees to engage in difficult conversations with respect and integrity, as these are key to fostering a strong organizational culture.

The 2024 Veterinary Innovation Summit, organized by the NAVC’s Veterinary Innovation Council, provided a platform for veterinary professionals to explore new ideas and technologies, paving the way for a more innovative and resilient future in veterinary medicine.

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