

RMTC Horseracing Testing Laboratory Committee (HTLC)

General responsibilities of the HTLC:

The HTLC is tasked with overseeing the RMTC Laboratory Accreditation Program and making recommendations on the Accreditation Program and the laboratories it accredits to the RMTC Board and Executive Committee. In addition, all activities and policies of the External Quality Assurance Program shall be directed, administered, and reviewed by the HTLC, whose mandate is to insure that the program services are relevant to the needs of the racing industry, that sample distribution policies are fair and timely, that protocols for the generation of proficiency testing samples are appropriate, and that the External Quality Assurance Program Provider complies with all contractual requirements and agreements.

Members:

Dr. Dionne Benson

Dr. Michael Hardy

Ms. Petra Hartmann

Dr. Lynn Hovda

Dr. Scott Palmer

Dr. Mary Scollay (RMTC staff)

Christopher Ware (RMTC staff)

Biographical Summaries:

Dr. Dionne Benson

As Chief Veterinary Officer for The Stronach Group (TSG), Dr. Benson is responsible for directing all veterinary safety and welfare practices and protocols, as well as equine research initiatives for TSG's 1/ST Racing and training brands including California's Santa Anita Park, Golden Gate Fields and San Luis Rey Downs, Gulfstream Park, Gulfstream Park West and Palm Meadows in South Florida, and Pimlico Race Course, Laurel Park and Bowie Training Center in Maryland.

Prior to that position, Dr. Benson was the Executive Director and COO for the RMTC. She also serves on several veterinary committees with the International Federation of Authorities (IFHA) and works closely with the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB) on refining medication rules for horses racing at Santa Anita and Golden Gate Fields.

She has been honored with the prestigious international Presidents' Award for Exemplary Service by the Association of Racing Commissioners (ARCI).

Dr. Benson holds a Doctorate in Medicine from the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota, a Juris Doctor (JD) from the William Mitchell College of Law and a Bachelor of Science from the College of Natural Resources from the University of Minnesota, St. Paul. She practiced law as a commercial litigator for a number of years prior to enrolling in veterinary school, and was a law school faculty member while she was attending veterinary school.

Dr. Michael Hardy

Dr. Hardy has been the supervising official racing veterinarian for Indiana Grand Racing & Casino since 2013, and has held combined duties as a commission veterinarian for the Indiana Horse Racing Commission for two of those years. Prior to that, Dr. Hardy worked as commission veterinarian for the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission (KHRC) beginning in 2008, and continues to provide veterinary support for the KHRC on various nationally-televised racing events. He serves as a veterinary panel member for Breeders' Cup and participates on various committees for the RMTC. Dr. Hardy has given presentations at a number of veterinary and industry-related conferences on pre-race examinations, injury prevention, emergency response and race-day injury management.

Ms. Petra Hartmann

Ms. Hartmann is Laboratory Director for Drug Testing Services at Industrial Laboratories Co. with over 32 years' experience in veterinary drug testing. She received her bachelor's degree in Chemistry, and a Master of Science degree in Pharmacy/Forensic Drug Chemistry at the University of Florida. Ms. Hartmann is a fellow member of the Association of Official Racing Chemists, has served on the Testing Integrity Program and continues to be actively engaged in industry initiatives. Under her direction, Industrial Laboratories has published several articles related to equine drug testing and has developed a comprehensive drug screening program that has led to the detection of several novel drug findings. Industrial Laboratories conducts testing for 15 US and international horse racing jurisdictions, as well as serving the sled dog racing industry, livestock shows, bucking bull events, and other performance animal events.

Dr. Lynn Hovda

Dr. Hovda has been Chief Commission Veterinarian for the Minnesota Racing Commission since 1994. She graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in pharmacy, and the University of Minnesota with a degree in veterinary medicine. Dr. Hovda followed this with a large animal internship at the University of Georgia and a three-year residency in large animal medicine at the University of Wisconsin, where she obtained her Master of Science degree in 1989 and board certification in the College of Veterinary Internal Medicine in 1992. She is an adjunct Clinical Professor at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, where she teaches toxicology. Dr. Hovda is a founding partner and Director of Veterinary Services at SafetyCall International and Pet Poison Helpline – a private poison control center. She has presented at national conferences, co-authored numerous lay and scientific publications and book chapters, and edited toxicology sections in both small and large animal textbooks.

Dr. Scott Palmer

Dr. Palmer serves as the New York State Gaming Commission Equine Medical Director and is an adjunct professor at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. Prior to serving in these capacities, he worked for 38 years in the racing industry as a racetrack practitioner and referral surgeon at the New Jersey Equine Clinic, where he pioneered the use of lasers in minimally-invasive surgical procedures. Dr. Palmer is a past president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, and a past chair of the AAEP Racing Committee. He currently serves as a board member of the Thoroughbred Education and Research Foundation. Dr. Palmer is a regular speaker at international veterinary conferences and has published numerous scientific articles and book chapters on surgical topics. His current research efforts are focused on preventing fatal musculoskeletal injuries of Thoroughbred racehorses.