



Melina Zimmerman
DVM, DACVAA, CVPP, CVMA, CCRP

Why did you join IVAPM?

I joined IVAPM because pain management is at the heart of everything I do as a veterinarian. IVAPM has always been a leader in advancing awareness, education, and advocacy around pain management, and I wanted to be part of that collective effort. Being a member allows me to connect with like-minded professionals, contribute to the organization's mission, and help shape how our profession approaches pain care for animals.

What is the importance of pain management in veterinary medicine?

Pain management is fundamental to animal health and welfare. It's not just about alleviating discomfort—it influences mobility, recovery, behavior, caregiver well-being, and ultimately quality of life. Chronic and untreated pain can lead to physiologic stress, behavioral changes, and progression of comorbidities. Effective pain management improves outcomes, strengthens the human-animal bond, and demonstrates our profession's commitment to compassionate, whole-patient care.

What vet medicine pain management related initiatives are you involved with and/or most proud of accomplishing?

- I own and operate The Doggy Gym, a pain management and rehabilitation practice focused on multimodal care, where we integrate pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic pain management to give our patients the best care possible.
- I've had the privilege to lecture nationally and internationally to veterinarians and students on diagnosing, treating, and preventing chronic pain.
- I co-authored textbook chapters and proceedings on osteoarthritis management, pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies, and supplements—helping make evidence-based pain management more accessible to practitioners.
- Within IVAPM, I've participated in student outreach through lectures and VIN student rounds, which I'm especially proud of because fostering early engagement ensures pain management remains a priority for the next generation of veterinarians.

What passion veterinary projects are you currently involved?

- Education & CE: I continue to participate in continuing education events for veterinarians and veterinary professionals, including lectures, wet labs, workshops, to provide didactic and hands-on experience in pain management techniques.
- Client & Community Outreach: I love helping owners understand pain in their pets, recognize its signs, and learn how they can support treatment at home.
- Research & Collaboration: I am working on building and participating in clinical trials to help advanced evidence based pain management techniques in veterinary medicine.
- IVAPM Student Engagement: I am honored to serve on the IVAPM Board of Directors and focus on the IVAPM Student Chapter Committee, working to increase traction and



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expand outreach so students see pain management not as a niche, but as a core competency in veterinary medicine.

Bio:

Dr. Melina Zimmerman is a board certified veterinary anesthesiologist. She has also received additional certifications in pain management, medical acupuncture, and physical rehabilitation. She is the founder and veterinarian at The Doggy Gym, a stand alone pain management and physical rehabilitation practice in Belmar NJ and also does private anesthesia training and consulting. Dr. Zimmerman is passionate about promoting pain management education for students, veterinary professionals, and clients!