



Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

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Veterinary Medical Colleges, Departments of Veterinary Science, and Departments of Comparative Medicine *A Critical National Resource*

Objective

A major federal funding initiative to build infrastructure and provide ongoing support for faculty and programs dedicated to increasing human resource capacity in veterinary public practice.

Issue

- There is a critical shortage of veterinarians engaged in public practice areas such as regulatory medicine, public health and research.
- The veterinary colleges are a critical national resource, but are supported by only 27 states.
- The nation's professional veterinary education capacity has not changed appreciably in 20 years.
- It has been nearly 30 years since the U.S. government has provided general funding for veterinary medical colleges.

Approaches

- New funding is necessary to increase capacity to meet the shortage of public practice veterinarians.
 - Major federal funding initiative to build infrastructure, including administrative space, classrooms, teaching laboratories, research laboratories and BSL-3 laboratories
 - Ongoing support for faculty and programs focused on veterinary public practice
 - Proposals for awards would be peer-reviewed; annual progress reports would be required

Background

Veterinary medicine provides critical service to animals, humans and the environment. Veterinarians engaged in public practice have an essential role in public health, food safety, food security, infectious diseases, emerging diseases, global health, laboratory animal medicine, drug and vaccine safety and environmental quality. Veterinary public practice also includes veterinary faculty, state agricultural, and public health veterinarians.

Veterinarians are an integral part of this nation's public health system. Nearly all of the biological agents that pose the highest risk to national security cause diseases that are transmitted from animals to man; veterinarians have special expertise in diagnosing, preventing and controlling these types of diseases. Newly emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, such as SARS and monkeypox, will likely be zoonoses and require substantial veterinary medical expertise to be effectively controlled.

The nation is facing serious shortages in all of these areas of public practice because the professional educational capacity has not changed in 20 years. The 28 veterinary colleges in the U.S. graduate approximately 2,300 veterinarians per year and presently they are not able to keep up with societal needs in private or public veterinary practice. Since the veterinary colleges serve as a NATIONAL RESOURCE, a federal response is required.

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