

United States Animal Health Association - 2004

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 10 APPROVED

SOURCE: UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SUBJECT MATTER: FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL VETERINARY
MEDICAL SERVICE ACT (PUBLIC LAW 108-161)

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2004

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States is experiencing a shortage of veterinarians in rural agricultural and inner-city areas, in certain population groups, and in various veterinary disciplines, such as public health, epidemiology and food safety. Veterinarians are the nation's first line of defense against disease outbreaks. Veterinarians are critically needed by federal and state governments to preserve our nation's biosecurity and food safety.

Mean educational debt for 2003 graduates was \$76,558, an increase of 5.3 percent over 2002 graduates. Mean starting salary, across all types of practice, was \$41,602 (JAVMA January 15, 2004). Loan repayment consumes almost one-third of the income of recent graduates; by comparison, a greater percentage than for other health professions. This disparity between salary and debt precludes recent veterinary graduates from accepting lower-paying positions in rural agricultural, inner-city and governmental areas, where they are needed most.

The National Veterinary Medical Service Act was signed into law in December 2003, but has not received any funding appropriations. It authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into agreements with veterinarians who provide services in veterinary shortage situations in exchange for veterinary education loan repayment. If funded, it will also provide veterinarians with additional loan repayments in exchange for service in federal emergency situations. \$60 million in federal appropriations, over three years (\$20 million per annum), would permit 400 veterinarians to participate in the program over that period of time.

RESOLUTION:

That the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the House Agriculture and the Senate Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees immediately provide \$20 million per annum to fund the National Veterinary Medical Service Act, P.L. 108-161.

Furthermore, the USAHA urges the Secretary of Agriculture to request line item funding for the National Veterinary Medical Service Act beginning in the FY06 executive budget.

SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)– NO RESPONSE – 5-26-05

HOUSE AG
SENATE AG FORRESTRY
SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS