

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2999

To amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance and increase the number of veterinarians trained in veterinary public health.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 23, 2009

Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. SCHRADER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance and increase the number of veterinarians trained in veterinary public health.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Veterinary Public Health Workforce and Education
6 Act”.

7 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
8 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings.

Sec. 3. Veterinary education capacity building initiatives through the National Center for Research Resources.

Sec. 4. Enhancing the public health veterinary medicine workforce.

Sec. 5. Implementation plan.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) Veterinary medicine is an integral and in-
4 dispensable component of the Nation's public health
5 system. Veterinarians protect human health by pre-
6 venting and controlling infectious diseases, ensuring
7 the safety and security of the Nation's food supply,
8 promoting healthy environments, and providing
9 health care for animals.

10 (2) Veterinarians are essential for early detec-
11 tion and response to unusual disease events that
12 could be linked to newly emerging infectious dis-
13 eases, such as, SARS, and West Nile Virus, or other
14 biothreat agents of concern.

15 (3) Veterinarians have been intimately involved
16 in responding to recent disease threats, such as the
17 H1N1 outbreak in North America in the spring of
18 2009.

19 (4) There is a need to build national capacity
20 in research and training in the prevention, surveil-
21 lance, diagnosis, and control of newly emerging and
22 re-emerging infectious diseases.

1 (5) Veterinarians are uniquely qualified to ad-
2 dress these high priority public health issues because
3 of their extensive professional training in basic bio-
4 medical sciences, population medicine, and broad,
5 multi-species, comparative medical approach to dis-
6 ease prevention and control.

7 (6) There is a shortage of veterinarians working
8 in veterinary public health.

9 (7) The Government Accountability Office
10 (GAO) released a study in February 2009 that fo-
11 cused on the Federal Government’s lack of veteri-
12 nary manpower and coordination of human capital
13 needs for veterinarians (GAO–09–178). The GAO
14 report found the workforce shortage will worsen “as
15 a result of space constraints at the Nation’s 28 vet-
16 erinary colleges”.

17 (8) The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects
18 there to be 28,000 job openings in the veterinary
19 medical profession by 2012 due to growth and net
20 replacements, a turnover of nearly 38 percent.

21 (9) The Nation’s veterinary medical colleges do
22 not have the capacity to meet the current and future
23 demand for veterinarians and veterinary expertise
24 that is vital to maintain public health preparedness.

1 (10) The Federal Government has not provided
2 resources to increase the number of veterinarians in
3 the workforce in over 30 years.

4 **SEC. 3. VETERINARY EDUCATION CAPACITY BUILDING INI-**
5 **TIATIVES THROUGH THE NATIONAL CENTER**
6 **FOR RESEARCH RESOURCES.**

7 Subpart 1 of part E of title IV of the Public Health
8 Service Act is amended by adding at the end the following
9 new section:

10 **“SEC. 481E. VETERINARY EDUCATION CAPACITY BUILDING**
11 **GRANTS.**

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through
13 the Director of the National Center for Research Re-
14 sources, shall award competitive grants to eligible entities
15 for purposes of increasing the number of veterinarians in
16 the workforce and veterinary teaching faculty in the field
17 of veterinary public health as defined by section 774.

18 “(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive
19 a grant under subsection (a), an entity shall—

20 “(1) be—

21 “(A) a public or other nonprofit college or
22 school of veterinary medicine accredited by the
23 American Veterinary Medical Association;

24 “(B) a public or nonprofit, department of
25 comparative medicine, department of veterinary

1 science, school of public health, or school of
2 medicine that is accredited by at least one rec-
3 ognized body approved for such purpose by the
4 Department of Education and that offers grad-
5 uate training for veterinarians in an area of
6 veterinary public health; or

7 “(C) a public or nonprofit entity that con-
8 ducts residency training programs for veterinar-
9 ians that are approved by a veterinary specialty
10 organization that is recognized by the American
11 Veterinary Medical Association and that offers
12 advanced training for veterinarians in an area
13 of veterinary public health; and

14 “(2) prepare and submit to the Secretary an
15 application, at such time, in such manner, and con-
16 taining such information as the Secretary may re-
17 quire.

18 “(c) CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS.—The Sec-
19 retary shall establish procedures to ensure that applica-
20 tions submitted under subsection (b)(2) are rigorously re-
21 viewed and that grants are competitively awarded based
22 on—

23 “(1) the ability of the applicant to increase the
24 number of veterinarians who are trained in areas of
25 veterinary public health;

1 “(2) the ability of the applicant to increase ca-
2 pacity in research on high priority disease agents;

3 “(3) the ability of the applicant to increase the
4 number of faculty who are trained in areas of veteri-
5 nary public health; or

6 “(4) any other consideration the Secretary de-
7 termines necessary.

8 “(d) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under sub-
9 section (a)(1), the Secretary shall give preference to—

10 “(1) applicants that involve more than one col-
11 lege or school of veterinary medicine, department of
12 comparative medicine, department of veterinary
13 science, school or program of public health, school of
14 medicine, or residency training program that offers
15 postgraduate training for veterinarians in an area
16 defined in section 774; and

17 “(2) applicants that significantly increase en-
18 rollment in veterinary public health education pro-
19 grams.

20 “(e) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts received under a
21 grant in this section shall be used by a grantee to increase
22 the number of veterinarians in the workforce through—

23 “(1) paying the costs associated with construc-
24 tion, the acquisition of equipment, and other capital
25 costs relating to the expansion of new or existing

1 colleges or schools of veterinary medicine, depart-
2 ments of comparative medicine, departments of vet-
3 erinary science, or entities offering residency train-
4 ing programs to veterinarians;

5 “(2) paying the capital costs associated with the
6 expansion of academic programs that offer post-
7 graduate training for veterinarians or concurrent
8 training for students in veterinary public health;

9 “(3) paying the salaries associated with hiring
10 additional faculty to meet an increase in veterinary
11 student capacity;

12 “(4) developing a veterinary public health cur-
13 riculum to attract veterinarians into careers in pub-
14 lic health; and

15 “(5) providing scholarships to graduated veteri-
16 narians or veterinary students to receive a master’s
17 in public health.

18 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
19 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
20 \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2010, \$100,000,000 for fis-
21 cal year 2011, and \$50,000,000 for each of the fiscal years
22 2012 through 2014. Such sums shall remain available
23 until expended.”.

1 **SEC. 4. ENHANCING THE PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARY**
2 **MEDICINE WORKFORCE.**

3 Part E of title VII of the Public Health Service Act
4 (42 U.S.C. 294n et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
5 the following new subpart:

6 **“Subpart 3—Veterinary Medicine Workforce**
7 **“SEC. 771. VETERINARY FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT PRO-**
8 **GRAM.**

9 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, acting
10 through the Administrator of the Health Resources and
11 Services Administration, may enter into an agreement
12 with eligible individuals for the repayment of education
13 loans, in accordance with this section, to increase the num-
14 ber of qualified veterinary faculty in the field of veterinary
15 public health.

16 “(b) AGREEMENTS.—Each agreement entered into
17 under subsection (a) shall require that the eligible indi-
18 vidual shall serve as a full-time member of the faculty of
19 a school of veterinary medicine accredited by the American
20 Veterinary Medical Association, or a department of com-
21 parative medicine, department of veterinary science,
22 school of public health, or school of medicine accredited
23 by the Department of Education for a total period, in the
24 aggregate, of at least four consecutive years during the
25 ten-year period beginning on the later of—

1 “(1) the date on which the individual receives
2 a master’s level degree in an approved field of study
3 and doctorate veterinary medicine degree from a col-
4 lege or school of veterinary medicine accredited by
5 the Department of Education or a doctorate in an-
6 other approved field of study; or

7 “(2) the date on which the individual enters
8 into an agreement under subsection (a).

9 “(c) AGREEMENT PROVISIONS.—Agreements entered
10 into pursuant to subsection (a) shall be entered into on
11 such terms and conditions as the Secretary may specify,
12 consistent with the following:

13 “(1) Not later than 10 months after the date
14 on which the ten-year period described in subsection
15 (b) begins, but in no case before the individual
16 starts as a full-time member of the faculty of a
17 school, department, or college described in such sub-
18 section, the Secretary shall begin making payments,
19 for and on behalf of that individual, on the out-
20 standing principal of, and interest on, any loan of
21 that individual obtained to pay for such degree.

22 “(2) For an individual who has completed a
23 master’s level degree in an approved field of study—

24 “(A) payments may not exceed \$10,000
25 per calendar year; and

1 “(B) total payments may not exceed
2 \$40,000.

3 “(3) For an individual who has completed a
4 doctorate degree in an approved field of study—

5 “(A) payments may not exceed \$25,000
6 with respect to fiscal year 2010, adjusted for
7 subsequent fiscal years to reflect the increase in
8 Consumer Price Index; and

9 “(B) total payments may not exceed
10 \$100,000 with respect to fiscal year 2010, ad-
11 justed for subsequent fiscal years to reflect the
12 increase in Consumer Price Index.

13 “(d) BREACH OF AGREEMENT.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any agree-
15 ment made under subsection (a), the individual is
16 liable to the Federal Government for the total
17 amount paid by the Secretary under such agree-
18 ment, and for interest on such amount at the max-
19 imum legal prevailing rate, if the individual fails to
20 meet the agreement terms required under subsection
21 (b).

22 “(2) WAIVER, SUSPENSION, OR CANCELLATION
23 OF LIABILITY.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an indi-
25 vidual making an agreement for purposes of

1 paragraph (1), the Secretary may suspend or
2 waive, in whole or in part, liability under such
3 paragraph in accordance with this paragraph if
4 the Secretary deems compliance by the indi-
5 vidual cannot be fulfilled. The Secretary or the
6 designee of the Secretary shall review all re-
7 quests for suspensions and waivers under this
8 paragraph. In addition, the Secretary may can-
9 cel or terminate an agreement made under sub-
10 section (a) under very limited circumstances
11 consistent with the provisions of this paragraph.

12 “(B) SUSPENSION.—

13 “(i) IN GENERAL.—A suspension of li-
14 ability of an individual under paragraph
15 (1) may be granted under subparagraph
16 (A) if compliance with such liability by the
17 individual is temporarily impossible or
18 would involve a temporary extreme hard
19 ship such that enforcement of the liability
20 would be unconscionable.

21 “(ii) MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION; ILL-
22 NESS OF FAMILY MEMBER.—Such a sus-
23 pension shall be granted under subpara-
24 graph (A), for not more than one year, if
25 the participant provides independent med-

1 ical documentation of a physical or mental
2 health disability, or a terminal illness of an
3 immediate family member, that results in
4 the participant's temporary inability to
5 perform the obligation.

6 “(iii) CALL TO ACTIVE DUTY IN THE
7 ARMED FORCES.—Such a suspension shall
8 be granted under subparagraph (A) if the
9 participants is a member of a reserve com-
10 ponent of the Armed Forces who is called
11 to serve on active duty, but for not more
12 than one year beginning on the activation
13 date described in the member's call to ac-
14 tive duty order.

15 “(C) WAIVER.—A waiver of liability of an
16 individual under paragraph (1) may be granted
17 under subparagraph (A) if compliance by the
18 individual is permanently impossible or would
19 involve a permanent extreme hardship such that
20 enforcement of the liability would be uncon-
21 scionable.

22 “(D) CANCELLATION.—The liability of an
23 individual under paragraph (1) may be can-
24 celled in its entirety upon the death of the indi-
25 vidual.

1 “(3) DATE CERTAIN FOR RECOVERY.—Subject
2 to paragraph (2), any amount that the Federal Gov-
3 ernment is entitled to recover under paragraph (1)
4 shall be paid to the United States not later than the
5 expiration of the 3-year period beginning on the date
6 the United States becomes so entitled.

7 “(4) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts recovered under
8 paragraph (1) shall be available to the Secretary for
9 making loan repayments under this section and shall
10 remain available for such purpose until expended.

11 “(e) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—For the pur-
12 poses of this section, the term ‘eligible individual’ means
13 an individual who—

14 “(1) is a United States citizen, national, or law-
15 ful permanent resident;

16 “(2)(A) has a degree in an approved field of
17 study as defined in section 774; or

18 “(B) is enrolled on a full-time or part-time
19 basis in such a program.

20 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
21 are authorized \$20,000,000 for each of the fiscal years
22 2010 through 2014 to carry out this section. Such sums
23 shall remain available until expended.

1 **“SEC. 772. VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH FELLOWSHIPS.**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through
3 the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services
4 Administration, shall establish fellowship programs de-
5 scribed in subsections (b) and (c) for veterinarians to pro-
6 vide on-the-job training in food systems security and vet-
7 erinary public health.

8 “(b) FULL-TIME ONE-YEAR FELLOWSHIPS.—The fel-
9 lowship program described in this subsection is a program
10 under which—

11 “(1) eligible individuals are hired through the
12 Department of Health and Human Services as fel-
13 lows for a one-year period on a full-time basis;

14 “(2) the Secretary may enter into cooperative
15 agreements with other departments and agencies of
16 the Federal Government that employ veterinarians
17 (including the United States Department of Agri-
18 culture, the United States Agency for International
19 Development, the Department of the Interior, the
20 Department of Commerce, the Department of
21 Homeland Security, the Environmental Protection
22 Agency, and the Department of Defense) under
23 which such fellows are placed with such other de-
24 partments and agencies;

1 “(3) to be eligible to receive a fellowship an in-
2 dividual would be a graduate of a school or college
3 of veterinary medicine; and

4 “(4) with respect to an individual receiving a
5 fellowship under the program, the Federal Govern-
6 ment agrees to pay a monthly stipend for each
7 month the individual participates in such fellowship,
8 the amount of which shall be determined by the Sec-
9 retary based on the individual’s degree and relevant
10 experience, such that—

11 “(A) such individuals who have earned a
12 doctoral level academic degree in an approved
13 field of study shall be eligible for a monthly sti-
14 pend of \$4,600 for fiscal year 2010; adjusted
15 for subsequent fiscal years to reflect the in-
16 crease in Consumer Price Index, and

17 “(B) such individuals who have earned an
18 academic degree at a Masters level in an ap-
19 proved field of study shall be eligible for a
20 monthly stipend of \$1,000 for fiscal year 2010;
21 adjusted for subsequent fiscal years to reflect
22 the increase in Consumer Price Index.

23 “(c) PART-TIME FELLOWSHIPS.—The fellowship pro-
24 gram described in this subsection is a program under
25 which—

1 “(1) eligible individuals are hired on a part-time
2 basis through the Department of Health and Human
3 Services as fellows;

4 “(2) the Secretary may enter into cooperative
5 agreements with other departments and agencies of
6 the Federal Government that have employ veterinar-
7 ians (including but not limited to: the United States
8 Department of Agriculture, the United States Agen-
9 cy for International Development, the Department of
10 the Interior, the Department of Commerce, the De-
11 partment of Homeland Security, the Environmental
12 Protection Agency, and the Department of Defense)
13 under which such fellows are placed with such other
14 departments and agencies;

15 “(3) to be eligible to receive a fellowship an in-
16 dividual shall be enrolled in a school of veterinary
17 medicine or a graduate of a school of veterinary
18 medicine;

19 “(4) with respect to an eligible individual par-
20 ticipating in such program, the Federal Government
21 agrees to pay a monthly stipend for each month of
22 such participation in the amount of \$2,000 for fiscal
23 year 2010; adjusted for subsequent fiscal years to
24 reflect the increase in Consumer Price Index; and

1 “(5) from amounts appropriated for carrying
2 out this section, the Secretary shall transfer funds
3 to the head of each agency participating in such pro-
4 gram for the costs of supporting the beginning sala-
5 ries of such veterinarians at such agency for not
6 more than 2 years.

7 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
8 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
9 \$2,500,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 through
10 2014. For fiscal years after fiscal year 2010 such amount
11 shall be adjusted to reflect the increase in Consumer Price
12 Index. Such sums shall remain available until expended.

13 **“SEC. 773. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIVISION OF VETERI-**
14 **NARY MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH AT**
15 **HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMIN-**
16 **ISTRATION.**

17 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish,
18 within the Health Resources and Services Administration,
19 a Division of Veterinary Medicine and Public Health, to
20 administer programs related to veterinary medicine and
21 public health.

22 “(b) DIRECTOR.—The Secretary shall appoint an in-
23 dividual to direct the Division who is a distinguished lead-
24 er from the field of veterinary medicine or public health.

1 **“SEC. 774. DEFINITIONS.**

2 “For purposes of this subpart:

3 “(1) VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH DEFINED.—

4 The term ‘veterinary public health’ includes—

5 “(A) biodefense and emergency prepared-
6 ness, emerging and reemerging infectious dis-
7 eases, environmental health, ecosystem health,
8 pre and post-harvest food protection, regulatory
9 medicine, diagnostic laboratory medicine, veteri-
10 nary pathology, biomedical research, rural and
11 government practice; and

12 “(B) the sum of all contributions to the
13 physical, mental, and social well-being of hu-
14 mans through an understanding and application
15 of veterinary science.

16 “(2) APPROVED FIELD OF STUDY.—The term
17 ‘approved field of study’ includes—

18 “(A) doctoral degrees (VMD, DVM, MD,
19 DO, PhD, DDS) in veterinary medicine, human
20 medicine, or another appropriate and applicable
21 scientific field; and

22 “(B) Masters degrees in veterinary pre-
23 ventative medicine, public health, science, vet-
24 erinary science, or another appropriate and ap-
25 plicable scientific field.”.

1 **SEC. 5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**

2 Not later than 180 days after the enactment of this
3 Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services,
4 through the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, shall sub-
5 mit to Congress an implementation plan for all provisions
6 of this Act and amendments made by this Act.

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