



Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

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Legislation Before Congress to Address Critical Shortfall of Veterinarians

Washington, D.C. -- May 12, 2005 -- Demand for new veterinary graduates is high and will continue to grow, given the urgent need for veterinarians trained to protect the nation's food supply and from emerging infectious diseases. While the job outlook for veterinarians is favorable, the colleges that train them are dealing with fewer resources to turn out the numbers needed. There are only 28 veterinary medical colleges in the U.S., and more than 30 years have lapsed since the U.S. government provided general funding for them. As a solution to this potential public health crisis, Mississippi Congressman Charles "Chip" Pickering, Jr. (R-3rd) introduced HR 2206, the Veterinary Medical Workforce Expansion Act of 2005 (VWEA).

Under VWEA, the Department of Health and Human Services will administer a competitive grants program that allows veterinary medical colleges to expand their numbers by building new classrooms and teaching laboratories as well as research laboratories needed to study the biological agents that pose significant risks to our food supply. Last month, Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) introduced HR 2206's companion bill, Senate bill 914.

Congressman Pickering has been a great supporter of veterinary medical education," said Dr. Lawrence E. Heider, Executive Director of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, speaking on the congressman's role as vice chair of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. "He has helped us promote the understanding of the veterinarians important role in public health and national security."

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AAVMC represents all veterinary medical colleges in the United States and Canada, eight departments of veterinary science, eight departments of comparative medicine, two animal medical centers, and three international colleges of veterinary medicine in its collective dealings with governmental bodies, veterinary medical organizations, the animal and human health industry, educational and scientific organizations and the public.