



North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association

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Chairman Nathe and members of the House Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association (NDVMA) I am asking for **support of HB 1003**; specifically, funding for the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). PSEP funding is vital for veterinary medicine for the following reasons:

- **PSEP provides a level playing field for North Dakota students to have access to veterinary medicine education programs.**
 - 85% of North Dakota veterinary medicine students utilize PSEP; without access to PSEP the number of ND students becoming veterinarians would be compromised (PSEP supports up to 12 veterinary medicine students/year).
- **PSEP provides vital funding to help offset some of the non-resident tuition costs.** Most of North Dakota's veterinary medicine students are charged twice the amount for tuition costs compared to tuition costs for residents of a respective State.
 - I.e., non-resident tuition costs \$58,777/year vs. resident tuition costs \$27,879/year
 - PSEP provides financial support ranging from 25% to 50% of the "non-resident" tuition costs for a ND veterinary medicine student.
- **The debt-to-income ratio is increasing steadily each year for veterinary medicine graduates. PSEP funding provides viability for students to pursue careers as veterinarians.**
 - On average, student debt for veterinary medicine students has increased each year by \$3,199 due to rising tuition fees. New graduate salaries are not increasing proportionally.
 - In 2021, 84% of veterinary medicine new graduates had a mean debt of \$186,430.
 - Salaries for veterinarians are disproportionate across work sectors with the highest average salary at \$103,881 (companion animal practice) to the lowest average salary at \$54,539 (equine practice). The debt-to-income ratio continues to be of serious concern.

Thank you for your past support of PSEP funding for North Dakota veterinary medicine students. The NDVMA asks for your continued support of PSEP, as it has proven to be a valuable investment in our veterinary medicine students and is key to facilitating a veterinarian workforce for North Dakota. As costs continue to rise for ND's veterinary students, it is critical to fund PSEP to ensure veterinary medicine as a viable career option for our students and to help meet the growing need for veterinary public health services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Christenson".

Lisa Christenson, DVM
President of NDVMA