



National Institutes of Health (NIH)

APPROPRIATIONS BILL: Labor, Health and Human Services

AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$32 billion

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST FOR FY 2013: \$30.7 billion

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

ACCOUNT: National Institutes of Health

TYPE OF FUNDING REQUESTED: Agency-Level

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:

Two of NIH's stated goals are to foster fundamental & innovative research and to develop, maintain, and renew scientific human and physical resources. Graduates of veterinary medical colleges play an integral role in the biomedical research enterprise. With expertise in comparative medicine and animal models, doctors of veterinary medicine (DVM) bring a unique and vital skill set to the research team and the biomedical research enterprise. AAVMC will continue to work with NIH to ensure that DVMs are provided more opportunities at the ICs.

On average, veterinary medical college students graduate with \$140,000 in debt, facing the same obstacles allopathic and osteopathic physicians face in terms of debt load. Unfortunately, loan repayment for graduates of veterinary medical school wishing to pursue biomedical research is limited. This limitation is contributing to the shrinking pool of veterinary researchers as graduates choose to pursue career paths that will allow for faster repayment of educational debt. AAVMC will continue to work with NIH to expand the shrinking pool of postdoctoral training opportunities, as they are vital to meeting NIH's goals and can help incentivize graduates to consider the additional education required of biomedical researchers.

In order to meet the potential of "One Health," protect public health, and fulfill NIH's goals, graduates of veterinary medical colleges should receive the same support afforded other biomedical researchers to conduct postdoctoral fellowships. In this economic climate, expanding federal opportunities for biomedical research fellowships may be difficult, but AAVMC will work to ensure that veterinary graduates have the same opportunities to compete for the existing positions afforded other health professionals.

REQUESTED REPORT LANGUAGE:

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Doctors of Veterinary Medicine and Loan Repayment Programs. — The Committee recognizes the importance that doctors of veterinary medicine (DVMs) play in the biomedical research enterprise with their strong backgrounds in comparative medicine and animal models. Like other medical professionals, a large debt load upon graduation influences their choice to enter biomedical research. DVMs are eligible for NIH's Loan Repayment Programs, and the NIH has taken steps to clarify this. However, DVMs still remain ineligible for both the Clinical Research and Clinical Research for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds loan repayment programs. DVMs play an integral role in clinical research as part of the research team should be considered under these categories when they are part of the research team. NIH should clarify this point to potential applicants, the ICs and reviewers.

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