

Submitter: Nicole Chamberlin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2167
January 22, 2025

Dear Representatives Ken Helm and Mark Owens,

I am writing this letter in support of HB 2167. I am a graduate of the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine Class of 2000 and have been engaged in small animal practice in the Portland, OR metropolitan area for over 20 years.

OSU is requesting \$10 million for the Lois Bates Acheson Veterinary Teaching Hospital and \$3.5 million for the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Lab to support protecting public and animal health through disease surveillance, diagnosis, and the training of future veterinarians. The funds will address the severe shortage of veterinarians in rural Oregon, support ongoing veterinary education, and enhance our capacity to combat significant health threats to animals and humans.

Workforce Development - The Oregon Employment Department ranks veterinarians as one of Oregon's fastest growing occupations and estimates a 25% growth over the next 10 years, and OSU is one of only 33 accredited veterinary medical schools in the US. Opportunities exist for specialized training, such as zoo, exotics, and wildlife medicine, marine sciences, clinical nutrition, and various clinical specialties (cardiology, oncology, theriogenology, anesthesiology, internal medicine, and surgery). OSU gives students a well-rounded education that emphasizes the importance of core training in comparative biology and medicine, including all primary clinical disciplines and domestic animal species.

Current Veterinary Shortages - Oregon has six federally designated regions with a chronic shortage of veterinarians. Douglas, Sherman, Tillamook, Klamath, Crook and Umatilla counties have severe, long-standing shortages of food animal veterinarians to support area farmers and ranchers. This negatively impacts Oregon agriculture which accounts for 13% of the state's GDP.

Public Health - Disease threats to Oregonians continue to evolve. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (bird flu) has jumped into mammals, including cats, cattle and humans, while diseases such as chronic wasting disease and mosquito-borne diseases threaten public health and the health of the environment, impacting hunting and outdoor recreation.

Uniquely Positioned - The Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) is Oregon's only laboratory positioned to address diseases of concern to Oregon's animals, public, and environment. Its ability to address these concerns is gravely threatened by chronic insufficient funding and badly outdated facilities.

Funding - Support for veterinary medical education and cutting-edge disease diagnostics in Oregon has lagged the rest of the nation for decades, leaving the state vulnerable to emerging disease threats and with too few veterinarians to support animal agriculture. OSU ranks 31 out of 33 veterinary colleges in state funding at \$3.4 million; the national average is \$13.4 million annually. Revenue generated from tuition to the college is not nearly enough to ensure excellence in its service and teaching.

Thank you for considering my comments in regards to this legislation.

Best,

Nicole Chamberlin, DVM

Travelling ER veterinarian Thrive Pet Healthcare