



ALBERTA  
SKILLED TRADES AND PROFESSIONS

*Deputy Premier  
Office of the Minister  
MLA, Edmonton - South West*

AR 318

MAR 14 2023

Mr. Sebastien Dutrisac  
Chair, Provincial ASB Committee  
c/o Mr. Stephen Bevans  
Secretary, Provincial ASB Committee  
Box 580  
Cardston AB T0K 0K0

Dear Mr. Dutrisac:

The Honourable Brian Jean, Minister of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development, forwarded a copy of your February 2, 2023 letter regarding the 2023 Agricultural Service Board (ASB) Resolutions. As Minister of Skilled Trades and Professions responsible for the *Veterinary Profession Act*, I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The Alberta government is aware of the severe shortage of veterinarians across all veterinary practice types in Alberta. Recognizing the particularly acute scarcity of veterinarians in rural Alberta, we have been working closely with the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (ABVMA) to address this critical issue.

In 2021, the ABVMA and the Alberta Veterinary Technologist Medical Association (ABVTA) collaborated with the Government of Alberta to conduct a workforce study to gain a comprehensive understanding of key human resource issues facing the veterinary profession in Alberta. As a result of the study, the ABVMA established two industry-focused working groups to explore possible actions. One of the working groups is on domestic education of veterinary professionals in western Canada and the other is on utilization and retention of veterinarians and veterinary technologists. Both the ABVMA and the ABVTA are optimistic that through working with stakeholders, educational institutions, and the Alberta government, the issue will be resolved.

The ABVMA has also recently completed a study, namely the Economic Impact Assessment of the Veterinary Medical Sector in Alberta, to document the economic benefits of veterinary medicine to the province of Alberta. The study addresses the impact of the veterinary medical sector on rural communities and has become a useful tool in supporting the ABVMA and the veterinary profession's efforts to address the critical workforce shortage issues.

As part of the Alberta Recovery Plan and under the Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy, the Alberta government has recently developed new entrepreneur immigration streams for the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program to help bring in skilled economic immigrants, including veterinarians, to support the province's workforce. There are two streams that may contribute to addressing the

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labour shortage in rural Alberta. The Rural Renewal Stream supports attraction and retention of immigrants through a community-driven approach responsive to local economic development needs in rural Alberta communities, and the Rural Entrepreneur Stream attracts and encourages qualified and capable immigrant entrepreneurs to start new or buy existing businesses, conduct the day-to-day operations, and live-in rural communities to support economic growth in rural Alberta.

As you know, the Alberta government has also recently provided additional funding to the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM). This money will be used to increase programming for veterinary studies and allow the UCVM to double its yearly enrolment of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students from 50 to 100 by 2025.

Regarding your suggestion to establish a mid-level veterinary professional designation to address the rural veterinary shortage and provide mid-level supportive care to Alberta livestock producers, my department will confer with the ABVMA to discuss the proposal. To implement another category of veterinarian, the ABVMA will require member approval, a formal proposal for changes to the *Veterinary Professional Act*, and significant consultations with stakeholders, educational institutions, and the public. While not a fast solution to the situation, it may fit into the range of responses that will work together to help address the shortage.

Like your committee, the Government of Alberta recognizes the important role of veterinarians in this province and the critical need to address the labour shortage in this profession. Thank you for writing and bringing this proposal to my attention.

Yours very truly,



Honourable Kaycee Madu, KC, ECA  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Skilled Trades and Professions

cc: Honourable Brian Jean, KC, ECA  
Minister of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development