

SESSION OF 2026

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2582

As Amended by House Committee on
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Brief*

HB 2582, as amended, would create the Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas Act (Act).

Purpose of Act (Section 1)

The bill would state the purpose of the Act is to provide encouragement, opportunities, and incentives for licensed veterinarians to practice veterinary medicine (vet med) serving food-animal patients in rural communities and enhance the long-term retention of veterinarians in those communities.

Definitions (Section 1)

The bill would define several terms, including:

- “Food animal” to mean any animal that:
 - Is raised for the production of an edible product intended for consumption by humans;
 - Is itself intended for consumption by humans; or
 - Provides a fiber product for human use;
- “Program agreement” to mean an agreement to meet all the obligations required by the bill; and

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

- “Rural” or “rural community” to mean any county in Kansas with a population not exceeding 40,000 or any service at a registered veterinary premises if food-animal patients make up at least 50 percent of the veterinary practice conducted at such premises at the time that the person entered into the program agreement.

Sunset (Section 1)

The bill would sunset the provisions of the bill on July 1, 2032.

***Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas
Advisory Committee (Section 2)***

The bill would establish the Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas Advisory Committee (Committee) to assist in the administration of the program established by the bill, including the review of applications and selection of participants.

The Committee would consist of the following seven members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary):

- Four veterinarians licensed in Kansas who each practice primarily in a rural community;
- One representative of the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA); and
- Two representatives of the livestock industry.

The Committee would be authorized to meet at any time and place upon the call of the Chairperson who would be appointed by the Secretary. Vacancies would be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

***Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas
Program (Section 3)***

The bill would establish the Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas Program (Program) within the KDA. The Program would be administered by the KDA in accordance with the Committee.

Purpose

The Program would be designed to support food-animal veterinarians (food-animal vets) in rural Kansas and enhance the long-term retention of veterinarians in rural communities.

Awards

The Program would provide awards of up to \$100,000 per individual or the total of the individual's education debt balance (student loans), whichever is less, subject to appropriations, and require a four-year commitment from the individual to practice in a rural community.

Eligibility

The bill would require an eligible individual to have the following qualifications:

- Be a graduate of an accredited college of vet med;
- Be licensed or have a pending license to practice vet med in Kansas;
- Have at least \$25,000 in education debt at the time of application;
- Be currently engaged in full-time practice in a rural community or commence full-time practice in a rural community once the individual is licensed to practice vet med in Kansas; and

- Not be a participant in the continuing Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas.

The bill would allow for an individual with a pending license to practice vet med in Kansas to be approved to enter into a program agreement, except that the individual would not receive any award moneys prior to becoming licensed.

Applications

The bill would require applications to be submitted in a form and manner determined by the Advisory Committee, which would be required to prioritize applicants consistent with the purposes of the Program and available appropriations.

Program Agreements

The bill would require each program agreement to require the participant to:

- Continue practicing as a licensed veterinarian in a rural community for four continuous years unless the obligation is otherwise satisfied as provided in the Act;
- Engage with the rural community beyond normal veterinary practice duties;
- Participate in professional development activities, as determined by the Advisory Committee;
- Submit an annual report to the Advisory Committee describing the engagement by the participant; and
- Comply with any additional provisions adopted by the Advisory Committee.

Award Amounts

The bill would cap award amounts, subject to appropriations by the Legislature, at \$100,000 per individual or the total of the participant's education debt balance, whichever is less, to be disbursed in installments over the required service period pursuant to the program agreement.

Program Provisions

The bill would allow the Advisory Committee to adopt additional provisions, requirements, or conditions for participation in the Program as deemed practicable and appropriate or necessary for implementation or administration. Any of these provisions would not be inconsistent with the Act or appropriation acts of the Legislature.

Program Agreement Provisions

The bill would allow the inclusion of reasonable provisions addressing breach of contract, including prorated repayment, timelines for repayment, and interest consistent with the Act.

Failure to Satisfy an Obligation

The bill would require, upon failure to satisfy the obligation to engage in the full-time practice of vet med in accordance with the Act and the program agreement, the participant to repay within 90 days the amount equal to the amount awarded less a prorated amount based on any periods of vet med practice that meets the requirements of the Act, plus interest at the prime rate of interest plus 2.0 percent from the date the award accrued.

The interest would be compounded annually. The KDA would be responsible for enforcing the agreement and collecting any damages or penalties owed.

Postponement

The bill would allow for an obligation to engage in the practice of vet med during any period of temporary medical disability during which the participant is unable to practice due to a disability or during any other period of postponement agreed to or determined in the program agreement.

An obligation would be considered satisfied if:

- The obligation to engage in the practice of vet med required by this section or the program agreement has been completed;
- The participant is unable to practice vet med because of permanent disability; or
- The participant dies.

Report to the Legislature

The bill would require the Secretary to submit a report on or before February 15 each year to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources and House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources that details the:

- Participation in the Program;
- Amount of awards that have been distributed; and
- Location of Program participants.

Contractual Administrative Partner (Section 4)

The bill would allow the Secretary to contract with one statewide nonprofit veterinary medical association to:

- Provide administrative support to the Advisory Committee for the application and selection process; and
- Issue awards from the Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas Program Fund (Fund).

The bill would require the Secretary to assess an administrative fine against any nonprofit organization awarded a contract for failure to satisfy the requirements of the Program or for intentional or reckless misuse of any funds awarded by the terms of the contract. The State Treasurer would be required to deposit any fines in the State Treasury to the credit of the State General Fund.

***Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas
Program Fund (Section 5)***

The bill would establish the Fund in the State Treasury. The Fund would be administered by the Secretary, subject to any contract entered into by the Secretary.

The bill would require all moneys credited to the Fund to be expended only for awards and administrative expenses necessary to implement and administer the Program for individuals who enter into a program agreement. The bill would also require various administrative functions to make expenditures from the Fund and deposits in the Fund.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at the request of a representative of the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) on behalf of the KLA and Rural Veterinarian Workforce Task Force.

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Veterinary Medical Association and Rural Veterinary Workforce Task Force, which includes the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Farm Bureau, KLA, Kansas Veterinary Medical Association, and Livestock Marketing Association, in addition to the K-State College of Veterinary Medicine and K-State Department of Animal Science and Industry.

The proponents stated the average student loan debt for more than 80 percent of vet med students is over \$200,000. The bill would assist with partial debt relief in the face of food-animal veterinarian shortages in rural Kansas. It was noted that 60 percent of Kansas livestock producers report a shortage of veterinarians.

Neutral testimony was provided by Representative Gardner, DVM, who noted the Legislature should do what is helpful to support the food-animal industry in the state, with currently good profits in the beef industry and growth in the dairy and poultry industries. However, the bill would take taxpayer moneys and provide it to an unelected committee to disburse to certain selected individuals. He acknowledged that previous attempts to address the rural veterinarian shortage have not addressed the problem.

Written-only **opponent** testimony was provided by two veterinarians from Linn County, who stated the bill interferes with free enterprise and gives unfair advantages to new graduates.

No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to add a sunset of July 1, 2032.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, the Kansas Board of Veterinary Examiners indicates enactment of the bill would have negligible effect on the agency's expenditures, which could be absorbed within current resources.

The KDA indicates enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on its operations.

The Division of the Budget notes the bill does not provide for the initial capitalization of the Fund or any source of regular revenue to the Fund. Any necessary funding would need to be identified in subsequent legislation.

Any fiscal effect associated with enactment of the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2027 Governor's Budget Report*.

Developing Veterinary Medicine in Rural Kansas Act; veterinary services; food animals; rural communities