

Ministry of Northern Development
and Mines

Ministère du Développement du Nord
et des Mines

Office of the Minister

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April 16, 2013

Ms Evelyn Peck, President
Ms Glenna Smith, Advocacy Coordinator
The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario
7382 Wellington Road 30, RR 5
Guelph ON N1H 6J2

Dear Ms Peck and Ms Smith:

Premier Wynne has provided me with a copy of your letter regarding veterinarian services for large animals in rural areas of Northern Ontario. As Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I am pleased to have an opportunity to review your organization's resolution requesting financial support for students who enter veterinary college.

As noted in the Premier's letter, my Ministry oversees the Veterinary Assistance Program (VAP). With a current annual budget of \$830,000, the VAP helps promote the viability of the northern and remote livestock industry by providing grants to participating veterinarians. It helps offset a veterinarian's cost of driving to the farm gate, which would otherwise be the responsibility of the livestock owner. The VAP operates in 22 designated under-serviced areas of Ontario, the majority of which (18) are in the North. There are currently 25 veterinarians who have chosen to take part in the program, including four in the Sundridge/North Bay/Sturgeon Falls area.

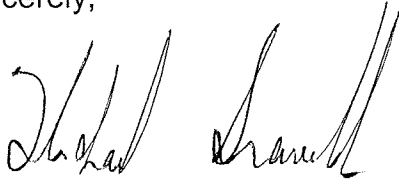
Regarding your resolution requesting financial support for veterinary college students, in exchange for a return-of-service commitment in Northern Ontario, such assistance would require a reallocation of VAP funds currently being accessed by practicing veterinarians. My Ministry's staff work closely with a number of stakeholder organizations with respect to the VAP, including the Northern Producers Animal Health Network, the Designated Area Veterinarians Association, 22 Veterinary Services Committees and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. I have asked my Ministry's staff to discuss your request with the stakeholder organizations, to determine if they would support all or a portion of the VAP budget to be reallocated to tuition support for students.

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I have also taken the liberty of providing a copy of your letter to my colleague, the Honourable Brad Duguid, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, for his information.

In closing, please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Gravelle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and the last name "Gravelle" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Gravelle
Minister of Northern Development and Mines

c: The Honourable Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario and Minister of Agriculture and Food

The Honourable Brad Duguid
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities