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Vet shortage nearing 'crisis' level

Animal welfare group sounds alarm, B.C. urged to hike funding for training

Jennifer Saltman

Over the last three to five years, Dr. Rob Ashburner has been forced to turn away growing numbers of patients from his Vancouver veterinary clinic.

The wait for a routine visit has increased, and when emergencies arise, soldiers have to be called in to help.

"We've backed solid," said Ashburner, who opened the West King Edward Animal Clinic more than 30 years ago.

"The reason Ashburner is so busy is because of the shortage of vets.

The vet shortage has been well-documented in the province, and it's estimated that, if demand continues to grow, B.C. will need more than 140 new vets each year to keep up.

"We're not training enough veterinarians," said Chuck Brown, executive director of the B.C. Veterinary Medical Association.

"There are nearly 1,600 veterinarians employed in the province, and it's estimated that, if demand continues to grow, B.C. will need more than 140 new vets each year to keep up with demand."

More safeguards needed to reel in big business of methadone treatment

Sapna Drahm

The disciplinary action taken against Danielle Tipton paints a stark picture of the challenges the College of Pharmacists of B.C. has faced in attempting to reign in bad operators.

Tipton, who was fined $10,000 for the first time in 2016.

She lost her license to practice in 2017.

In 2018, her methadone-prescribing privileges were suspended for 20 days, but there were no other cases on the college's posting on its website.

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Frontpage
Last year, about 11,400 B.C. residents used methadone to treat their opioid addiction. Providing methadone is so lucrative that pharmacists go to unusual and illegal lengths to secure its drug.