Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Invests in Future Veterinarians with New Wellness Center at Utah State University

The Purina Pro Plan Wellness Center now available to support mental health and wellbeing of veterinary students on campus

LOGAN, Utah, Oct. 7, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Purina Pro Plan Veterinary announced the opening of the new Purina Pro Plan Wellness Center at Utah State University (USU), an investment through the Pro Plan Veterinary Support Mission, which helps remove barriers that veterinarians often face in practice. Located within the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), the wellness center represents Pro Plan Veterinary's commitment to supporting veterinary professionals throughout their vet med journey – beginning as veterinary students. The center will provide USU vet students with rooms to meet one-on-one with the college's wellness specialists and a space for meditation and mindfulness practice, ensuring that self-care becomes as central to their career paths as putting on a pair of scrubs.

"The Purina Pro Plan Wellness Center represents our commitment to making wellbeing an integral part of veterinary education," said Michael Bishop, the director of student affairs for USU's CVM. "We want our students to develop not only the knowledge and clinical skills to care for others, but also the habits, resources, and resilience needed to sustain themselves throughout a demanding and rewarding career in veterinary medicine."

The opening comes as USU continues to build its new four-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program, which welcomed its inaugural class of 39 veterinary students in August 2025 and moved into the new Thomas and Patricia Willis Veterinary Medical Education building in summer 2026. The class of 2030, comprised of 77 students, joined the college and started first-year instruction this fall.

Supporting Veterinarians from the Start

Veterinary professionals dedicate their careers to caring for animals and the people who love them. But the work is not without its challenges, and many veterinarians experience burnout. While veterinary students face a different set of challenges, the outcome is similar, with one study reporting that 32% of 1st year veterinary students experienced clinical levels of depressive symptoms.[1] Pro Plan Veterinary believes supporting the calling to care should begin well before veterinarians enter clinical practice, helping bring a greater focus on mental health and wellness to veterinary students as they prepare for careers after graduation.

"Veterinary medicine is an incredibly rewarding profession, but we also recognize the demands that come with answering the call to care," said Emily Cross, DVM, DABVP, Director of Vet Technical Communications, Purina. "Our commitment to veterinary professionals begins before their first day in practice. By investing in the Purina Pro Plan Wellness Center at Utah State University, we want to create an environment where future veterinarians have access to resources for their well-being as they develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they will carry throughout their careers."

Utah State University's CVM received its provisional accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education in 2025. The college is focused on preparing skilled, compassionate veterinary professionals to serve animals, people and communities in Utah and beyond.

Working For Veterinarians

Since its launch in 2024, the Pro Plan Veterinary Support Mission has contributed more than $3.5 million to non-profit organizations addressing challenges across the veterinary profession. These challenges include mental health support for stress through a partnership with the Veterinary Hope Foundation; financial assistance when clients can't afford life-saving care, supported through the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) REACH Program™ and Paisley Paws; and increasing access to expert care for challenging behavior cases, provided by Ease Pet Vet.

The Purina Pro Plan Wellness Center at Utah State University broadens that mission by investing in future veterinarians during a formative period in their careers.

For more information about the Pro Plan Veterinary Support Mission and its work to support veterinary professionals, visit ProPlanVet.com.

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1 Hafen M, Reisbig AMJ, White MB, Rush BR Predictors of depression and anxiety in first-year veterinary students: A preliminary report. J Vet Med Educ. 2006;33(3):432-440. doi:10.3138/jvme.33.3.432.

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