



VALVT Position Statement on the Veterinary Nurse Initiative

The Virginia Association of Licensed Veterinary Technicians (VALVT) supports the Veterinary Nurse Initiative (VNI) and the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) in the pursuit of the establishment of a national credential of Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN).

The VALVT was established in 1974, as the first “Animal Technicians” were certified in Virginia and has supported the growth of the profession in Virginia by providing professional representation, education and communication. As the roles of the veterinary technician have evolved, the VALVT has promoted the full utilization of technical and nursing skills, provided information to members regarding current trends and forward movement in the profession, built relationships between veterinary technicians, veterinarians and other veterinary team members and encouraged the highest standard of care. The VALVT enjoys outstanding support from the AVMA accredited Veterinary Technology programs in the state (Blue Ridge Community College, Northern Virginia Community College, Tidewater Community College) as well as the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association and the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine.

The standard of practice in Virginia is high and credentialed veterinary technicians are considered by an overwhelming majority of practitioners as an integral part of providing excellent patient care from the exam room to the ICU. Despite best efforts, a small minority of practices and individuals are using the title veterinary technician without the credential and people are performing tasks on patients in violation of existing laws and regulations. This remains a major contributing factor in the attrition rate of qualified, credentialed LVTs leaving the profession at alarming rates and creating a perceived shortage. This not only lowers the

standard of medicine/ethics profession wide, but misrepresents the level of professional care patients are receiving and clients are expecting. This emphasizes the lack of recognition of the profession; the public does not know what a veterinary technicians is, what they do and the profound impact technicians can have on patient outcomes. People do understand what a nurse is and have some idea of the professional role nurses have in patient care.

While the VALVT and the general membership individually have worked tirelessly over the past 4 decades to increase public awareness of the profession of veterinary technology, title recognition remains an obstacle in the public perception of the role of Licensed Veterinary Technicians.

Virginia enjoys a diverse population, geography and socioeconomic landscape, with a workforce that is often changing as a result of the military presence in the Tidewater and Northern Virginia regions and the influx of new residents attracted to the national government base surrounding Washington, DC.

The Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) nationally recognized credential will have a positive impact in Virginia for several reasons:

- Will provide a unified credential that will be accepted by the profession by clearly defining the role, education and title of the RVN.
- Will streamline the process for qualified, credentialed RVNs to relocate to Virginia
- The title will be more recognizable to the public, building a baseline of recognition for the role in patient care
- Will provide title protection for qualified credentialed veterinary nurses

The veterinary profession faces professional and economic challenges, requiring a unified effort to increase the public image that assures continued high quality of care to animals and their guardians. Professional title recognition and title protection of veterinary nurses will help clarify and assure the public that their animal's care meets professional standards. Standardization of credentials will allow seamless transition between states in an ever increasing mobile population, insuring appropriate education, examination and standards.

While the Veterinary Nurse Initiative is not a solution for the myriad of issues facing veterinary medicine, it is an important first step.

Continuing the role of representing veterinary technicians in Virginia, the Virginia Association of Licensed Veterinary Technicians fully supports the Veterinary Nurse Initiative. We believe the goals of the VNI align with our mission and values and will have an unprecedented impact on moving the profession forward and protecting the public.

Approved this 9th Day of August, 2018 by:

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