

# Credentialing and Specialization for Veterinary Staff

## ‘Supporting the Team’

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**2015 Fall VSPA Meeting**

*Reno-Tahoe, NV    October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

## Today's Objectives

Participants will

- be able to define the types of veterinary technician credentials and specializations.
- be able to distinguish between the types of schools and academies and discuss methods to obtain veterinary technician credentialing in the United States and Canada.
- show the ability to find the resources necessary to determine credentialing and regulation in a state, province, or country.
- be encouraged begin to develop a plan within their practices to support and encourage veterinary support staff to credential and/or specialize.
- be able to apply tools taught in lecture and utilize resources given to demonstrate proper utilization of their staff and why this is essential to the cohesiveness of the veterinary team and the health and welfare of the animal.



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## Show of hands

- Veterinarians
  - Specialty
- Practice Managers
  - CVPM, CMAR
- Veterinary Technicians
  - RVT    CVT    LVT
  - VTS
  - VTS or VT credentialing in progress
- Veterinary Support Staff
  - Representations?
  - Why is this important?



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## Terminology

**Veterinary Technician** – a graduate of a two- or three-year AVMA or Canadian approved program of veterinary technology.

Veterinary technology programs are reviewed and accredited by the **CVTEA (Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities)** which consists of a body of 20 veterinarians, veterinary technicians, public persons. Schools undergo a rigorous documentation and often an on-site visit to ensure the students are receiving a quality education across all animal disciplines and veterinary medical disciplines.

Read more here:

<https://www.avma.org/professionaldevelopment/education/accreditation/programs/pages/cvtea-about.aspx>



***2015 Fall VSPA Meeting***

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### Degrees and Certificates – in general

- Applied Associate of Sciences (AAS) – 2 year vocational degree
  - Veterinary Technician – upon graduation
  - Course credits often do not transfer to other schools of higher learning; individual colleges will vary with transferability
- Associate of Sciences (AS) – 2 or 3 year degree (Veterinary Technician)
  - Veterinary Technician – upon graduation
  - Course credits often able to transfer toward a bachelor's degree program.
- Bachelor's or baccalaureate degree (BS) – 4 year degree
  - Veterinary Technologist – upon graduation
  - Often includes 2 years of focused specialization in the junior & senior year



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### • **What a credentialed veterinary technician CAN do?**

- Veterinary technology is the science and art of providing professional support to veterinarians. Thus, the veterinary technician's role is to provide professional health care in conjunction with the veterinarian.
- The veterinary technician must be knowledgeable in the care and handling of animals, their normal and abnormal life processes, medical and surgical nursing, anesthesiology, diagnostic imaging, and clinical laboratory procedures.
- The duties of veterinary technicians shall be performed **under the direction, supervision, and responsibility of veterinarians**. These duties shall be accomplished in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.

### • **What a credentialed veterinary technician CAN NOT do:**

- Diagnose (or Prognose)
- Prescribe
- Performing surgery – unless regulated explicitly



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NON credentialed veterinary personnel are called.....

- Per the AVMA and Canadian guidelines, a person who is not a graduate of an approved program is called:

Unregistered assistant, veterinary assistant, veterinary nurse, caretaker, etc.

This person is NOT a Veterinary Technician.



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- Continuing Education or Continual Education (CE)
  - Highly recommended for all members of the veterinary team
  - Not always a requirement in each state or province. Attention to the regulations of individual states, regulating bodies, etc. are essential
  - Can vary from 0 hours to 10 hours per 2 years to 20 hours
  - May or may not be required to maintain credentials in any given state or province AND is subject to change, even on the state government level.



***2015 Fall VSPA Meeting***

*Reno-Tahoe, NV    October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

Within each state or province regulations determine that these individuals are beholden to the statutes and regulations specific to that state they are credentialed in.

- **Certification**-generally the least stringent, may be held by a voluntary group such as the veterinary technician association
- **Registration**-generally moderately stringent, likely to have wording inclusive on specifics for the tasks/duties, mandatory CE
- **Licensure**-generally the most stringent, statements exist specific to the vet tech in the Veterinary Practice Act, duties, CE, etc.



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*Reno-Tahoe, NV    October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

## Real Life Example

- **Certification** – completely voluntary in these two states
  - Wyoming – since 2000 (through Wyoming Veterinary Technician Association)
    - NO coverage in the Wyoming Veterinary Practice Act, although finally getting noticed/mentioned in meetings
  - Colorado – since 2009 (through Colorado Association of Certified Veterinary Technicians)
    - NO coverage in the Colorado Veterinary Practice Act. Largest statewide veterinary technician association in the US, actively involved with legislature with presence at the CVMA and CO State Board of Veterinary Medicine levels.
- **Registration**
  - California – since 1998 (through the Department of Consumer Affairs)
    - Complete coverage in the California Veterinary Practice Act, highly detailed
    - CA also has Certified Veterinary Assistants tested and mandated by the state
- **Licensure**
  - Alaska – since 2005 (through the Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development)
    - Complete coverage in the Alaska Veterinary Practice Act



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*Reno-Tahoe, NV    October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

## Legalities-Supervision RVT

### Direct Supervision (CA)

- supervisor physically present on site; is quickly and easily available; and
- animal has been examined by a veterinarian.
- RVT Job task regulations in CA:  
[http://www.vmb.ca.gov/laws\\_regs/rvttasks.shtml](http://www.vmb.ca.gov/laws_regs/rvttasks.shtml)



### Indirect Supervision (CA)

- supervisor is not physically present, but has given either written or oral instructions ("direct orders") for treatment of the animal patient; and
- the animal has been examined by a veterinarian and the animal is not anesthetized as defined in Section 2032.4.

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*Reno-Tahoe, NV October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

## Direct and Indirect Supervision California example

A RVT may perform the following procedures only under the **direct supervision** of a licensed veterinarian:

- Induce anesthesia;
- Apply casts and splints;
- Perform dental extractions;
- Suture cutaneous and subcutaneous tissues, gingiva and oral mucous membranes,
- Create a relief hole in the skin to facilitate placement of an intravascular catheter
- \*\*Life saving aid special circumstances (Section 4840.5)

An RVT may perform the following procedures **under indirect supervision** of a licensed veterinarian:

- Administer controlled substances.
- Subject to the provisions of subsection(s) (a), (b) and (c) of this section, a R.V.T. may perform animal health care tasks under the direct or indirect supervision of a licensed veterinarian. The degree of supervision by a licensed veterinarian over a R.V.T. shall be consistent with standards of good veterinary medical practices.



**2015 Fall VSPA Meeting**

*Reno-Tahoe, NV October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

## Resources

National Association for Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVLE)

<http://www.navta.net/Login.aspx>

- The Committee on Veterinary Technician Specialties (CVTS) was launched in 1994 and is recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association.
- The CVTS was formed in an initial response to veterinary specialists seeing the future need to have their veterinary technicians as skilled and specific professionals as themselves



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*Reno-Tahoe, NV    October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

## Veterinary Technician Specialties

### **Society**

- group of interested individuals wishing to promote a specialized area of veterinary medicine
- Academy
- Membership is open to all interested individuals

### **Academy**

- group of interested individuals wishing to promote a specialized area of veterinary medicine restricted to credentialed veterinary technicians
- Members must complete a formal process of education over and above the general veterinary technician, incorporate continual education to maintain knowledge, and testing



***2015 Fall VSPA Meeting***

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**2015 Fall VSPA Meeting**

**Reno-Tahoe, NV October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

## Approved NAVTA Societies and Academies

<http://www.navta.net/?page=specialties>

### Societies

- Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians
- The American Association of Equine Veterinary Technicians
- The American Association of Rehabilitation Veterinarians (AARV)
- Association of Zoo Veterinary Technicians
- Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society
- The Society of Laboratory Animal Veterinary Technicians

### Academies

- The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Anesthesia and Analgesia
- The Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians
- The Academy of Veterinary Clinical Pathology Technicians
- The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Clinical Practice
- The Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians
- The Academy of Dermatology Veterinary Technicians
- The Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians
- The Academy of Equine Veterinary Nursing Technicians
- The Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians
- The Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians
- The Academy of Veterinary Surgical Technicians
- The Academy of Veterinary Zoological Medicine Technicians



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**Reno-Tahoe, NV October 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015**



## Importance of Credentialing & Specialization

- Is credentialing a value to the veterinary profession and to the patient's we care for and their owners?
- How important are regulations, verbiage, and being responsible to the state as a veterinary technician?



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## As Specialty Veterinary Practices, what should you do?

- Active membership
  - State associations
  - NAVTA
  - Specialty credentials
- Learn your state's legislation AND stay on top of it
- TEACH
  - Programs always need instructors
  - New hires always need mentors
- Discuss what a credentialed veterinary technician is and does with ALL your clients, friends, AND veterinarians
- Specialists highlight your VTS technicians as your right hands.



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## The Support Fluff – fun, but effective ways to open the doors to discussion

- Speak at career days
- Offer client education seminars at your practice, 4H, animal services, etc. and INDICATE your credentials
- Other?
- Put your credentials on your checks – it's amazing the questions you'll get asked
- Wear your name tag with your credentials on it
- Other?



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## Is it worth it?

- Legislation is based on the consumer – the human
- How does veterinary medicine impact the HUMAN voting population
- Is a veterinary technician directly impacting human life and welfare?
  - Is a veterinarian or the veterinary staff doing the same?
- Brainstorm exercise



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Thank you  
for your  
support  
and  
dedication to  
the profession  
and to the  
animals and  
their owners

# VET TECHS

have it in their

# HEARTS

and

in their **HEADS**



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