

April 12, 2022

Position Statement on Veterinary Nursing

Background and Context:

In 2017, NAVTA launched the Veterinary Nurse Initiative in part to address the ongoing credentialed veterinary technician shortage present in Pennsylvania and the rest of the country. NAVTA's leadership proposes that standardizing the title to "veterinary nurse" enhances public awareness about the role of the CVT/RVT/LVT, as well as providing clarity about the role within the profession.

One of the significant issues with the title "veterinary technician" is that over the past several decades, it has been used to refer to virtually any employee of the veterinary practice, who is not the veterinarian, with no regard for that person's education or licensing. This has been detrimental in the following ways:

- CVTs have not been utilized to the extent of their education/training.
- Unlicensed people have been permitted to perform procedures for which they are not adequately trained or supervised.
- The public has been confused and misled by the random use of "vet tech."
- CVTs continue to leave the profession in large numbers citing low wages, lack of public recognition, underutilization, lack of opportunity for advancement, and compassion fatigue.
- Based on information and statistics provided by the Center for American Progress and the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, high turnover rates and job satisfaction issues for CVTs are likely increasing the costs for delivery of veterinary care.
- Employers continue to increase the number of advertised positions for veterinary nurses across the country in response to increased numbers of applicants for these positions. NAVTA strongly recommends that the title "veterinary nurse" only be used by those who hold credentials as a CVT, RVT, LVT, or LVMT. ([NAVTA | NAVTA: The Job Title of "Veterinary Nurse" Should Be Reserved For Credentialed Technicians](#))



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A [2016 NAVTA survey](#) showed that over half (56.7%) of the respondents had changed their place of employment within the first five years. According to the AAHA's *Compensation and Benefits*, the current rate of turnover for veterinary technicians is 23% annually. The [Center for American Progress calculates](#) the cost of turnover to be about 20% of each employee's annual salary for workers earning less than \$50,000.

PVMA's Position and Professional Support in the Commonwealth:

In 2020, the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association surveyed membership and found that 96% of respondents supported the Veterinary Nurse Initiative (VNI) and favored PVMA making a statement of support of the VNI. [[PVMA Keystone Veterinarian Spring 2020 \[32 - 33\] \(nxtbook.com\).](#)] **PVMA supports the VNI, and the goals of NAVTA for the change in title to lead to greater job satisfaction for veterinary nurses/CVTs, increased longevity in the field, and greater public awareness of the high level of care vet nurses provide to their patients.** PVMA also recognizes that the title of "registered veterinary nurse" (RVN) assists in improving public awareness of the role that CVTs provide in the delivery of veterinary services, and that improving the title may help to retain much needed CVTs/RVNs within the profession.

Furthermore, this shift toward "veterinary nurse" is seen across the state in credentialed educational programs. Over the past three years, three of the seven Pennsylvania programs fully accredited by the AVMA, transitioned from veterinary technology programs to "veterinary nursing" programs¹. A significant number of CVTs entering the workforce in Pennsylvania each year are graduating with degrees in "veterinary nursing," and want to be recognized as such in the workplace. On the national level, in addition to NAVTA, the AVMA also recognizes the term "veterinary nurse." The AVMA Board of Directors released the following position statement on terminology regarding veterinary technicians/nurses:

The AVMA recognizes efforts by the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) and others to use the term "veterinary nurse" in place of veterinary technician within the profession and in criteria for credentialing purposes. The AVMA further recognizes ongoing efforts to promote adoption of the term "nurse" in state practice acts. The AVMA will continue to use the term veterinary technician in its policies and communications; however, will recognize credentialed veterinary nurses as being equivalent to credentialed veterinary technicians.

PVMA requests the recognition of the title "veterinary nurse" in addition to "certified veterinary technician" within the Veterinary Regulations. Just as the Board of Veterinary Medicine recently updated the Regulations to include the use of the title "veterinary assistant" to replace the previously used "non-certified employee," PVMA asks that language be added, clarifying the title "registered veterinary nurse (RVN)" as equivalent to "certified veterinary technician (CVT)." [See recently submitted request, September 2021.]

¹ [Harcum College - Veterinary Nursing Degree](#)
[Veterinary Nursing - Johnson College of Technology](#)
[Veterinary Nursing | Wilson Edu](#)