



THE PUBLIC IS WATCHING THE VETERINARY TECHNICIAN LICENSURE BILL

By Dr. Al Balay, Chair, MVMA Veterinary Technician Committee

In this report we'll update you on the status of the veterinary technician licensure bills in the legislature. Our intentions are to ask each of you to contact your legislator at a very timely point during the 2024 legislative session. We have learned a great deal about the legislative process in these past few years, but a key point is that the timing of contact to your legislators is crucial.

Due to the real or perceived rural veterinarian shortage, some members of the public are both watching the status of the Veterinary Technician licensing bill and reaching out to their legislators. While the support of the licensing initiative is appreciated by the public, we are watching carefully for any legislative changes to the bills during the current session. Prior to the session, a small core group of technicians and veterinarians met with at least one-half of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee chaired by Representative Tina Liebling. We anticipate getting a hearing in her committee and feel that having so many of the committee members informed and on-board is important. Most if not all the Representatives that we met were supportive of the licensure bill and some of them are signed on as co-authors of the bill.

We had a good turnout of technicians and veterinarians at Veterinary Day at the Capitol on Wednesday, March 6th. This was another important way that we are keeping legislators informed about the initiative. There will be a time in the near future when it is vital to have you – both veterinary technicians and veterinarians contact their representative and senator asking them to support the bills. The MVMA lobbyists will both tell us when it is time for your input and provide a boilerplate email that each of you can personalize slightly, sign and send via email to your legislator. This “ask” will be sent to all MVMA and MAVT members as well as current Minnesota certified veterinary technicians. The lobbyists will make this easy for all of us. There will also be a website link to identify your legislators and their email addresses. When you see the request sometime in this legislative session, mid-February through April, please respond as soon as possible.

Another key point that has been stated previously is that when the licensure bill is passed and signed into law, it is expected that it will take the Board of Veterinary Medicine up to 18 to 24 months for rule writing. Therefore, the soonest that technicians could likely apply for licensure will be 2026. Current technicians should maintain their certification through the MVMA and current veterinary technology students in all the programs should continue to finish their program of study and most importantly, take the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE).

If you have questions or concerns about licensure of veterinary technicians, or if anyone has examples of how this licensure initiative could positively impact their business, we would love to hear your examples to share with legislators when we meet with them. Remember that all the information about the licensing initiative, including all the previous articles, is easily found on the MVMA website under the veterinary technician tab. Dr. Al Balay and Kim Horne's contact info is also found on the MVMA veterinary technician licensure webpage.