

# Statute highlights and proposed changes to the Minnesota Veterinary Practice Act

## Licensed Doctors of Veterinary Medicine (DVM)

- Under current law, DVM's are the only ones allowed to: Diagnose/Prognose; Prescribe medication; and Perform surgery
- Under current law, the supervising DVM must be on the client's premises or present in the veterinary facility while any employed non-veterinarian is performing health care services. **Proposed legislative change** – add a definition for remote supervision to allow services to be performed when the DVM is not on the premises.
- Under current law, the supervising DVM is required to be in visual or audible range of work performed on a patient. **Proposed legislative change** - The licensed DVM could delegate this supervisory task to their LVT.
- Under current law, DVM's are highly trained professionals that are required to have 8 years of schooling and pass National and State examinations. Veterinary specialists complete an additional 3 – 4 more years of training. MN DVM's need 40 hours of continuing education credits every 2 years to maintain their license.

## Licensed Veterinary Technicians (LVT)

- Under current law, veterinary technicians are considered an "Unlicensed employee". **Proposed legislative change** - add definition of veterinary technician\*
- With no legal standing in MN, veterinary technicians are solely recognized by the MN Veterinary Medical Association based on voluntary certification (CVT's). **Proposed legislative change** - voluntary certification would now become regulated licensure.
- As described in the previous section, the **proposed legislative change** is for the licensed DVM to be able to delegate the supervision of non-licensed employees' requirement to the regulated LVT.
- **Proposed legislative change** will increase the continuing education requirement to 15 credits every 2 years. Current requirement for CVT's is 10 credits every 2 years.
- Veterinary technicians who have 2-4 years of formal education, graduated from an accredited veterinary technician program and pass the national examination are known as credentialed veterinary technicians and eligible for licensure in almost all states and Canadian provinces.

## Veterinary Assistants (VA)

- Under current law, VA's are considered an "Unlicensed employee". **Proposed legislative change** - add definition of veterinary assistant\*
- As described in the previous section, the **proposed legislative change** is for the regulated LVT to be delegated the authority to supervise non-licensed employees to perform health care services the DVM believes the assistant is capable of.
- No proposed legislative changes for scope of practice - The VA will continue to be allowed to perform any task the licensed veterinarian believes they are competent to perform.
- Currently, VA's have no schooling requirements and are not credentialed, therefore there is no requirement for continuing education. No proposed legislative change to require CE credits.

### If this proposal passes, we anticipate:

- The LVT will have met an entry level requirement and the consistent use of this title will better inform the public of this profession.
- The general public will now have an avenue (Board of Veterinary Medicine) to address any complaints and concerns about the LVT.
- The LVT will now have oversight by the Board of Veterinary Medicine and a resource for the Veterinarian to address any serious concerns such as drug diversion. Unpublished data from a MN survey shows that 17% of veterinary practices had a concern of drug diversion. Of that 17%, veterinary technicians were mentioned as the personnel involved for 22% of those events. The majority of these vet techs were fired, with no reporting to the Board of Veterinary Medicine. With licensure, the LVT would now be able to be identified and have access to resources such as the Health and Professionals Services Program (HPSP).

**Benefits to Public Safety:** The veterinary technician is often on the front lines in veterinary practices, and utilizing their education and training can help ensure that the public, co-workers and patients are kept safe.

- ☑ Licensure improves consumer protection and public safety due to veterinary technician's knowledge especially in the areas of zoonoses, infectious disease control, and pharmacology
- ☑ Licensure provides greater State oversight of all activities of veterinary technicians increasing accountability and providing a mechanism for investigating and handling professional errors, misconduct, unethical behavior, and drug diversion
- ☑ Licensure sets a professional standard for training and skills for veterinary technicians, ensuring that these standards are met through examination and maintained through continuing education requirements
- ☑ Licensure provides assurance to the public who expect qualified pet care-givers and will result in improved patient care

**How the Licensed Veterinary Technician would impact Public Safety**

- To become licensed, a veterinary technician must graduate from an AVMA accredited program which meets the Standards of Accreditation of the CVTEA to ensure the quality of the educational experience and the assessment of student knowledge and skills.
- A graduate of a veterinary technician or veterinary technologist AVMA accredited program has taken and passed the rigorous Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE offered by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards), ensuring that these individuals are competent with entry level skills and knowledge.
- Additionally for licensure (compared to current certification) these individuals will be required to:
  - Take and pass an open book Jurisprudence Exam ensuring they are aware of current veterinary practice laws
  - Pass a criminal background check
  - Required to obtain 15 continuing education credits to renew their license

**\*Definitions for the Public as defined by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)**

**Veterinary Technology** is defined as: the science and art of providing professional support to veterinarians. The AVMA CVTEA® accredits programs in veterinary technology that graduate veterinary technicians and/or veterinary technologists.

**Veterinary Technician** is defined as:

- A veterinary technician is a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA- or Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)-accredited program in veterinary technology. In most cases the graduate is granted an associate degree or certificate.
- A veterinary technologist is a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA- or CVMA-accredited program in veterinary technology that grants a baccalaureate degree.

**Veterinary Assistant** is defined as: a person for whom the adjectives animal, veterinary, ward, or hospital are combined with the nouns, attendant, caretaker, or assistant. Training, knowledge, and skills are less than that required for identification as a veterinary technician or veterinary technologist. Veterinary assistant educational programs have been established but are not currently accredited by the AVMA.