

The Veterinary Technician Licensure Bill and the 2023 Legislature

Dr. Al Balay, Chair, MVMA Veterinary Technician Committee

In this article, #16 in the series, we share an update of where we are during the 2023 legislative session. The bill was introduced in the House of Representatives (HF 1228) on February 2, 2023 and in the Senate (SF 1522) on February 9, 2023. Both bills have bipartisan support and authors. We hope and anticipate getting a hearing in the House and then the Senate. We are cautiously optimistic that the bill has a chance this year. We have met with numerous legislators to inform them of the need to license veterinary technicians NOW! We are looking forward to participation from both veterinarians and technicians for Veterinary Day at the Capitol on March 8, 2023.

One of the major goals of the LVT initiative is to assist with **retaining** veterinary technicians in the profession. When we talk with legislators, our focus is different though. They are concerned about public safety including drug diversion by unlicensed individuals. Legislators also seem interested in the looming veterinary shortage and how licensure of technicians may alleviate the shortage. They also ask about costs, and we have shared that the cost of certification versus licensure will be very similar, and licensed veterinary technicians will not need to purchase personal liability insurance, as they are still taking direction from a licensed veterinarian.

Another strategy has been to get the public informed and possibly involved in support of the legislation. Here are key points about licensure for the public to know:

- one of only 8 States that doesn't regulate technicians
- provides assurance to the public of qualified and competent veterinary care
- State accountability and oversight of their actions
- recognizes the investment of taxpayers in technician education from State colleges (only four veterinary technician programs in MN and all are State colleges)
- leads to retention of technicians in the career field, which may help with the looming shortage of veterinarians

The following are the Key Components of the Bill directly from the MVMA website:

- Certified veterinary technicians currently in good standing with the MVMA are immediately eligible for licensure.
- Non-certified veterinary technicians would be eligible to apply if they are currently practicing, performed 4160 hours of experience (within the previous 5 years), and have a letter of recommendation from a licensed veterinarian stating their competency.

- With regulated credentialing, Licensed Veterinary Technicians (LVTs) will aid in the purpose to protect the health and safety of the public and animal patients in the state of Minnesota.
 - Properly trained veterinary team members impact many areas including: infectious diseases; zoonotic diseases; ensuring food and feed safety; animal control and injury protection.
 - Properly trained veterinary team members ensure functional health in companion animals, service and working animals, as well as livestock and research animals.
- Upon licensure, the role of veterinary technicians in patient care will be better defined while remaining under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian.
- With licensure, veterinary technicians will be able to provide direct supervision to veterinary assistants and other unlicensed employees of tasks delegated by the licensed veterinarian. We have also added a clause to allow for remote supervision of technicians by the DVM.
- Veterinary team members not eligible for licensure or choosing not to be licensed will be called veterinary assistants.
- Licensure also ensures veterinary technicians are familiar with and understand the state's laws and regulations governing their profession.
- MN Board of Veterinary Medicine shall oversee and establish licensure requirements.

For more information, please check out the [MVMA website](#) under the veterinary technician licensure tab. Our contact information is there if you have any questions.