

Getting to the Bottom of the Veterinary Technician Shortage in Minnesota

“Proposed Changes to the Minnesota Veterinary Practice Act ”

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

In this article, #15 in the series, we share a portion of a document created by several of us from the MVMA's Veterinary Technician committee. This document was created to be shared with legislators and others to highlight the proposed changes to the Veterinary Practice Act. Crucially, these proposed changes identify the Licensed Veterinary Technician who are considered “unlicensed employees” in the current practice act. We expect a bill to be introduced in both the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Senate in January 2023.

To see the entire document or for more information about the veterinary technician licensure initiative, please check out the [MVMA website](#) under the veterinary technician licensure tab. Our contact information is there if you have any questions.

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)

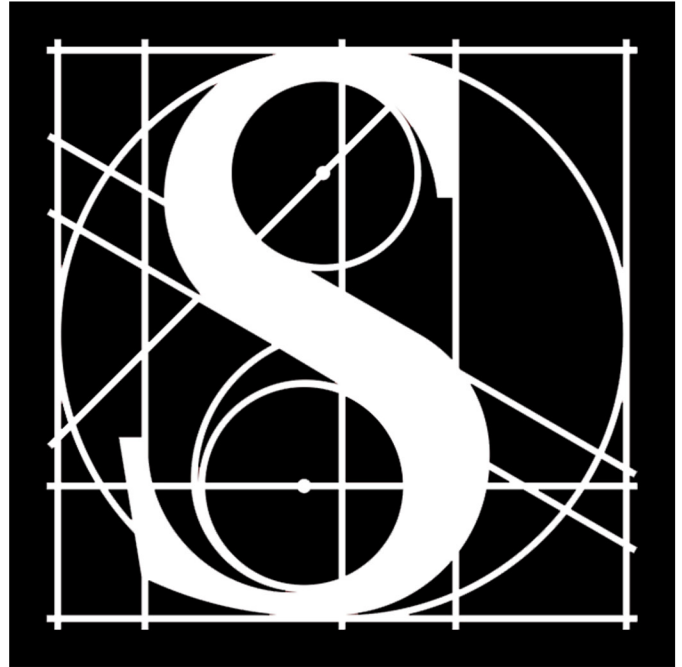
- Under current law, VA's are considered an “Unlicensed employee”. Proposed legislative change - add definition of veterinary assistant
- As described in the previous section, the proposed legislative change is for the regulated LVT to be delegated the authority to supervise non-licensed employees to 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.

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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).

Read the entire document at mvma.org/veterinary-technician-licensure



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