



AZVTA Board of Directors Position Statement



December 27, 2022

Arizona Veterinary Technician Association

Mid-level Practitioner Statement

Over the past two years, there has been extensive speculation about how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the daily workflow of veterinary clinics across the country. The inability to properly staff veterinary facilities with veterinarians, credentialed technicians, and support staff during this time has led industry leaders such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) to explore if there is a need for a mid-level practitioner (similar to a nurse practitioner in human medicine). It is thought to be a Master's level degree with unknown acceptance requirements.

There is already a role for credentialed technicians to advance through a Veterinary Technician Specialty which has been available through numerous academies for many years. This title does not assign a VTS significantly more permission to perform DVM tasks. A VTS is a subject expert and could easily fill the role of mid-level practitioner in their specialty, but state veterinary boards have not afforded them those privileges, so we must ask how creating a new role solves this staffing crisis. Addressing scope of practice within state veterinary practice acts is a more reasonable goal.

On polling our membership, we have found your responses indicate that, in many cases, your current wages do not justify pursuing additional schooling or VTS certification (especially to a Master's degree level). There is no standard increase in wages for VTS academy members, and it remains to be seen if the industry can and will provide adequate compensation to a mid-level practitioner. A technician with these privileges would create more revenue for a clinic and you would need to make a wage commensurate with that of performing DVM tasks. Before we could endorse this, we would need to see a plan to assure a wage that justifies this effort, and a defined scope of practice between DVM, mid-level, and credentialed technician. The exception to this may exist in the equine and food animal sector, which practices on a completely different model. The need for care may exceed the ability of a veterinarian to provide care, which can adversely affect the national food chain.

The overwhelming consensus among our members is your demand for title protection, scope of practice, and increased wages for the position you already fill. Our membership polls also indicated that you feel your skills are often knowingly underutilized in daily practice, and you would change employers if you were encouraged to use your skills elsewhere.

There are so many dedicated technicians among you, and you are the lifeblood of veterinary medicine. Your loyalty to your work is a testament to the grit of our community as vet techs. The technician profession is an endangered species, and the inability for technicians to make a living wage is having a lasting effect. Solving

other issues before existing issues for the Certified Veterinary Technician does not serve our immediate needs. The likelihood of this concept being acted upon may be years away, but technicians need to have a voice in decision making about our own futures.

It is the position of the Arizona Veterinary Technician Association that the mid-level practitioner role is extremely premature. Considering our inability to find a consensus on and provide protection of the title of "Veterinary Technician," and the varied scope of practice among credentialed technicians in each state, there is much work to be done before veterinary medicine is ready to take this step. The AzVTA intends to be part of this work, and make your role in veterinary medicine as valuable to the industry as it is to us.

- Board of Directors, Arizona Veterinary Technician Association