

JOURNAL



2023
Convention
Issue

VETERINARY NURSING IN ACTION

IN THIS ISSUE

6 Nutrition for the Veterinary
Cancer Patient

14 Tuition for Technicians:
The Winning Essays

20 The Journey to Becoming
a Veterinary Technician
Specialist (VTS)

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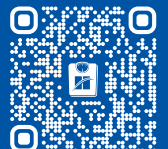


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90% of pet parents with an overweight pet don't realize it!

Get tools to make weight conversations easier



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Photo by iStock.com / Svetlana Sultanaeva

On the cover:

With advances in veterinary science, we now know that appropriate nutritional support can extend and improve the veterinary cancer patient's quality of life. This month, we're exploring to understand the nutritional needs of these patients to educate and support clients.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome To This Special Edition of The NAVTA Journal

First, I want to express my thanks and appreciation for Hill's Pet Nutrition for sponsoring this entire special "Convention Issue" of *The NAVTA Journal (TNJ)*. Not only does Hill's cover the entire production cost of printing and mailing this magazine, but they also provide most of the articles.



NAVTA will distribute printed versions of this special edition at all of the major industry conferences (VMX, WVC, AVMA, AVTE, etc.) and at regional and state events throughout the US in 2023. Hill's will also provide its representatives with printed copies to distribute to their clients. And, of course, NAVTA will provide all 8,500+ members with a digital edition. Suffice it to say, this special edition will be seen wide and far throughout the entire veterinary world for the next 12 months!

Inside this special edition you will find valuable education articles for which you can earn continuing education credit. You'll also find information about the NAVTA leadership team, the many valuable benefits of being a member of NAVTA, and the advantages of earning your Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) designation. Please visit www.navta.net for more information on all of NAVTA's programs and services, or

to contact us directly.

I would also like to point out that Hill's is also the exclusive sponsor of the annual National Veterinary Technician Week (NVTW) celebration. The year 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of NVTW and NAVTA is planning some very special events to commemorate the occasion. Stay tuned for details, but mark your calendar now for NVTW October 15-21, 2023.

Thanks and gratitude again to our friends at Hill's Pet Nutrition. I hope you enjoy this special edition of *The NAVTA Journal!*

Sincerely,

**Ashli Selke, RVT, CVT,
NAVTA President**



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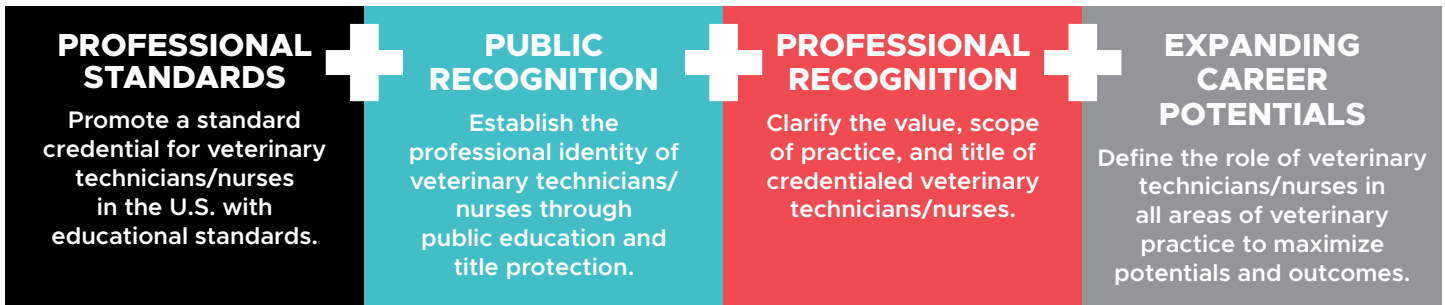
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The Veterinary Nurse Initiative Going into 2023



VNI GOALS



Within the veterinary profession, the role of the veterinary technician has perennially been challenged by a lack of cohesion and standards throughout the United States. Without a nationally recognized credential, the profession has been subject to the varying job title definitions of “technician” as legislated by state legislatures and enforced by state veterinary regulatory boards. This has resulted in a disjointed workforce of varying education and credentialing levels all using the same job title and creating an environment for potential endangerment to the animals entrusted by the public to be cared for by veterinary professionals.

To begin addressing the lack of industry standards, the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) formed a National Credentialing Initiative Task Force in 2016 to conduct background research, conduct a demographic survey, and meet with other national and state veterinary organizations. Out of this initiative came the call from the membership to advocate for the change of the profession’s title of veterinary technician to veterinary nurse. The shift of veterinary technicians from a task-based focus on the science and technology of animal care to a patient-centered focus on delivering nursing care utilizing their veterinary expertise and critical thinking abilities provides a basis for the advocating of the title change from veterinary technician to veterinary nurse.

In 2017, the NAVTA board created the NAVTA Veterinary Nursing Initiative tasked with four overarching goals:

- Promoting a national standard credential that is achieved after completing a standard set of educational courses and passing a comprehensive exam.
- Creating public awareness around the need for a national standardized credential and how it contributes to public safety and protection.
- Clarifying the value, scope of practice, and title to delineate the credentialed veterinary nurse/technician role.
- Expanding the utilization and career potential of veterinary nurses/technicians so that they are used within the veterinary workforce to their full potential.

The NAVTA Veterinary Nurse Initiative encompasses far more than a profession title change to “Veterinary Nurse” and releases statements and standards related to our profession.



2022 Status and Activities

Veterinary Nursing Programs

Support of the “veterinary nurse” title is being embraced by higher education institutions, with thirteen AVMA CVTEA accredited veterinary technology programs adopting the term “veterinary nurse” and renaming their programs. The following are the current programs utilizing “veterinary nurse”:

- Ancilla College of Marian University
- Camden County College
- Colby Community College
- College of Southern Nevada
- Eastern Florida State College
- Harcum College
- Independence Community College
- Johnson College
- Michigan State University
- Murray State College
- Purdue University
- Truckee Meadows Community College
- Wilson College

Title Protection Report

The Veterinary Nurse Initiative published a report titled “Title Protection for ‘Veterinary Technician’ Is Needed and Desired, But Absent and Misunderstood in Most States” which included a survey report on the sentiments surrounding title protection, a report on the current status of title protection in the United States, and recommendations to strengthen title protection.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations:

- **Only 21 states** currently have title protection for veterinary technicians
- **95.4% of Credentialed Veterinary Technicians** support establishing title protection
- **Providing respect for the profession, protecting the public from misrepresentation, and ensuring a standard of care** were major reasons respondents felt title protection was important
- **56.3% of those who spoke to practice leaders** about title protection saw positive change

State legislators, veterinary medical boards, state veterinary and veterinary technician associations, and each veterinary technician are urged to work together towards better title protection.

Professional Recognition of “Veterinary Nurse”

“Veterinary nurse” has seen adoption by professional societies and associations in their award and publication programs. A few examples are the American Humane Hero Veterinary Nurse Awards (American Humane), the Dr. Earl H. Rippie Veterinary Nurse Leadership Scholarship (VMX), and ER Veterinary Nurse of the Year Award, and the NAVC publication, *Today’s Veterinary Nurse*.

Adoption of the “veterinary nurse” job title is utilized by various animal hospitals, with job listings also reflecting the growing adoption of “veterinary nurse”. On job search websites Indeed, ZipRecruiter,

and Simply Hired, a search of the term “veterinary nurse” resulted in over 1,500 hits on job postings.

In response to the growing usage of the term “veterinary nurse” as a job title, NAVTA issued the following statement to help assist and guide employers in how it should be applied:

NAVTA recognizes that a growing number of employers are advertising positions for veterinary nurses. NAVTA only recognizes the use of the job title, “Veterinary Nurse,” by credentialed veterinary technicians (CVT, LVT, LVMT, or RVT). NAVTA urges that employers require credentials as a veterinary technician for those in veterinary nurse positions. NAVTA’s VNI Task Force recommends that these job postings specify that applicants must be credentialed veterinary technicians in accordance with state regulations.

Considerations for the use of “veterinary nurse” as job titles are:

- All “Veterinary Nurses” should be required to be a credentialed veterinary technician (CVT, LVT, LVMT, or RVT) to align with the goals of the VNI.
- This should not serve as a way to skirt the issue of differentiating between Veterinary Technicians and Veterinary Assistants. (i.e., calling everyone Veterinary Nurse, or calling non-credentialed individuals veterinary technicians).
- It must be clear that this is a job title, and not a credential or license title until such legislative changes are passed.

Legislative and Regulatory Advances

Since the beginning, the VNI has worked on the state level to make legislative advances that change the veterinary technician title to “Veterinary Nurse” or add the definition of “Veterinary Nurse” into the state veterinary practice act. While bills have progressed through the legislative process (e.g. passed

the House in Ohio), no state has fully passed a bill to make changes to the veterinary practice act to change the title. After initially working with a legislative strategist, NAVTA’s current strategy is to allow for organic growth of title support and support state technician association-driven efforts.

Some state veterinary medical boards (e.g., Ohio) have issued reports stating a change to the title should be made and is appropriate. There are current legislative and regulatory activities to pursue the title change in some states. Examples of recent activity include:

- In New Hampshire, regulatory changes were made to include the term “veterinary nurse” in the definitions of our profession stating (NH-vet-100-200 Sept 2021):

“Veterinary technician” means an individual who is credentialed to practice veterinary technology, and the term includes “veterinary nurse.”

- In Nevada, the Veterinary Medical Board unanimously voted to allow the use of “veterinary nurse” synonymously in veterinary facilities.
- In Virginia, the Veterinary Medical Board has updated its regulation to ensure veterinary nursing degree holders qualify for licensure as the existing language in its regulations caused a potential conflict. Other states this should be considered are Alaska, New Mexico, and South Carolina. All other states accept Veterinary Nursing degrees.
- In some states the word “nurse” is already used to describe veterinary technicians in the veterinary practice act.

While some states are working to advance “veterinary nurse” in their practice acts, many others are working to ensure that credentialing, title protection, and veterinary technician scope of practice are enacted. In January 2022, NAVTA issued the

Title Protection Report which examined the state of title protection for veterinary technicians in each state's practice act. Since the launch of the Veterinary Nurse Initiative, NAVTA has directly supported legislative and regulatory activity in coordination with Veterinary Technician associations in 21 states.

Additionally, there has been an increase in efforts in various states to establish experience-based, non-educational pathways to credentialing as a veterinary technician. In these instances, NAVTA has coordinated efforts with the local Veterinary Technician Association, local Veterinary Medical Association, and the AVMA where applicable to coordinate voices in opposition to changes that compromise credentialing standards.

With the growing need for coordinated state advocacy efforts, NAVTA has established the Government Relations Committee which will work in coordination with the District Representative Committee and Veterinary Nurse Initiative to drive state advocacy agendas.

Looking Forward

Since the inception of the Veterinary Nurse Initiative, there has been active discussion and debate about the challenges of our profession. In the years to come, NAVTA will continue to use the VNI to serve as a source of information and resources regarding credentialing issues in our field; track the state of title protection in state practice acts; examine the definition of veterinary technicians in scopes of practice; support the movement of veterinary technician education programs toward a focus on veterinary nursing care; continue to move the profession towards a standardized title; and facilitate positive change within our profession that supports retention of skilled veterinary technicians/nurses throughout the field of veterinary medicine.



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**NUTRITION
FOR THE** **VETERINARY
CANCER PATIENT**

by Ed Carlson CVT (VTS) Nutrition



LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Readers should gain an understanding of the key nutritional factors for feeding dogs and cats with cancer to potentially extend and improve their quality of life and to educate their owners.

According to the National Cancer Institute, in 2018 there were 18.1 million new cases of cancer in humans. By 2040, the number of new cancer cases per year is expected to rise to 29.5 million.¹ Cancer is not only human disease, but is also a distressing medical condition impacting millions of felines and canines, with an estimated 30 to 40 percent of cats² and 25 percent of dogs estimated to be affected by cancer.³ With advances in veterinary science, we now know that appropriate nutritional support can extend and improve the veterinary cancer patient's quality of life. In providing critical support, it is important for veterinary technicians to understand the nutritional needs of these patients to educate and support clients.

Nutritional History and Assessment

Acquiring a pet's nutritional history and assessing their food intake are the initial steps in developing an appropriate diet for an animal with cancer. The first step in providing nutritional support for a pet with cancer is to obtain the animal's nutritional history. The purpose of taking a nutritional history is to learn, in detail, what the patient is ingesting on a regular basis and what they are eating occasionally. Start this process by interviewing the client. Ask open-ended questions regarding the pet's current diet. Open-ended questions are those that require more than a one-word answer. For example, "What does your pet eat on a daily basis?" Open-ended questions

require more of an explanation or narrative to answer. You will often learn more about the pet's diet, and in a shorter amount of time, using this approach than if you asked specific questions. Avoid interrupting the client. On occasion, you may need to gently redirect a client who wanders too far off topic. Second, ask clarifying questions, if needed, to ensure you understand the client's responses. Use reflective listening to ensure that you understand the client's responses. For example, "As I understand, Hilda has free access to her dry food and nibbles on it throughout the day. Is this accurate?" Being successful at acquiring a complete nutritional history requires good listening skills! We naturally know how to hear, but listening is a learned skill. Like any skill, we need to develop and practice listening before we can become good at it. Active listening techniques, repeating back what you hear to the client, is a great way to ensure that you understand.

Completing a physical examination of the patient is the next critical component to developing an appropriate diet. A complete physical that includes a complete blood cell count along with a chemistry evaluation is an essential component of a nutritional evaluation. Patients should be weighed with their body weight documented in the medical record. Perform a body condition score and muscle condition score, reporting both in the medical record. Review the patient's past medical record for these key metrics, paying close attention to trends. Note if the patient is thin or losing weight, in poor body and muscle condition, has a poor hair coat, or chronic GI issues. These can all be signs of malnutrition and require further investigation.

Also note if the patient has low hemoglobin, low red blood cell counts, hypoproteinemia, and hypoalbuminemia as these may all be indications of chronic

malnutrition. Hyperparathyroidism and clinical osteopenia may also be seen in patients being fed an unbalanced homemade diet due to insufficient minerals such as calcium, iron, or copper.^{4,5} Owners feeding a homemade diet who are unwilling to transition their pets who have been diagnosed with cancer to an appropriate commercially available pet food should be referred to a veterinary nutritionist.

Key Nutritional Factors When Selecting a Diet for the Cancer Patient

Many dogs and cats with cancer have decreased appetite and therefore consume less calories. A major goal of nutritional therapy is to select a food that is highly palatable and energy dense. Ideally a diet deriving calories from protein and fat rather than carbohydrates is recommended.

Protein metabolism is altered in patients suffering from cancer which may result in loss of lean muscle mass and cachexia. Therefore, these patients require a higher level of highly digestible protein than healthy adults of the same species. Dietary protein, on dry matter basis, of 30% to 45% for dogs and 40% to 50% for cats is recommended.⁶ However, increased protein levels may be contraindicated in some patients with renal and liver disease.

Arginine, an essential amino acid, has been shown to improve immune function in cancer patients, promote wound healing, and inhibit tumorigenesis.⁷ Dietary levels of arginine in dogs and cats are unknown. However, based on research with dogs and rodents, providing more than 2% DM arginine in foods for dogs with cancer is recommended. Although no studies in cats have been published at this time, based on the minimum arginine recommendation of 1.5% DM for pregnant and nursing queens, the current

This program was reviewed and approved by the AAVSB RACE program for 1 hour of continuing education in jurisdictions which recognize AAVSB RACE approval. Please contact the AAVSB RACE program if you have any comments/concerns regarding this program's validity or relevancy to the veterinary profession.

recommendation for feline cancer patients is also greater than 2% DM.⁸

Several studies indicate that due to poor carbohydrate metabolism in canine cancer patients' diet, soluble carbohydrates may cause increased lactate production. For canines with cancerous tumors, the tumor metabolizes carbohydrates for energy, forming lactate. As a result, the body loses energy, causing increased blood lactate and elevated levels of insulin. A crude fiber level greater than 2.5% dry matter is recommended.⁹

In clinical trials of dogs with spontaneous cancer, high dietary levels of omega-3 fatty acids and arginine were shown to benefit dogs with lymphoma, nasal carcinoma, hemangiosarcoma, and osteosarcoma.^{10,11} Omega-3 fatty acids and arginine have also been shown to have a positive effect on quality of life, reducing clinical signs, and increasing remission and survival times.¹² Based on several studies, it is thought that a diet high in fat and low in carbohydrates supplemented with arginine and fish oil may be beneficial for canine cancer patients being treated with chemotherapy or radiation.¹³

Fish oil may also play a role in a cancer patient's diet. Fish oil is considered relatively safe for dogs, however several potential side effects including GI upset, coagulopathies, pancreatitis, and delayed wound healing may appear.¹⁴ Lower levels of fish oil and omega 3 fatty acids are recommended in cats due to the potential for developing severe bleeding.¹⁵ Therefore, in both species, veterinary therapeutic diets formulated for oncology patients is recommended verses supplementation of adult maintenance foods.¹⁶

There is a trend that owners are giving their pets antioxidants and other supplements. In fact, Lana, et al. (2006) reported that "Approximately 65% of pet owners are using some sort of alternative treatments; more than 30% of owners are giving their pets oral supplements, and more than 50% say their veterinarian approves of this use¹⁷." More recently, a 2016 study by Rajagopal, et al.,

reported "that more than 50% of owners incorporate some sort of nontraditional feeding pattern after cancer diagnosis, and 39% supplement the diet of their dog¹⁸." Pet owners may regard supplements as natural and harmless and may not report the use unless specifically asked by the veterinary health care team. Unfortunately, scientific evidence is lacking concerning potential adverse reactions of herbal and other supplements that are used with conventional cancer treatments. However, some supplements may interact with other drugs, including chemotherapeutic agents.¹⁹ Veterinary oncologists generally advise against supplementing cancer patients with antioxidants, herbal or other supplements or feeding raw or homemade diets especially while undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Vitamins may also play a role in the nutritional diet of a dog or cat with cancer. There are ongoing studies in human medicine on the role of vitamin A, vitamin D, selenium, folate, and cobalamin in cancer patients' treatment. However, there are no published studies in veterinary cancer patients at this time.

TABLE 1. Recommended Nutritional Factor Levels (DM)

	Dogs	Cats
Carbohydrate	≤25%	≤25%
Fat	25 - 40%	25 - 40%
Omega-3 Fatty Acids	>5%	>5%
Omega-6: Omega-3 ratio	-1:1	-1:1
Protein	30-45%	40-50%
Arginine	>2%	>2%

Reprinted from Small Animal Clinical Nutrition, 5th edition.

It is important that cancer patients consume sufficient calories to meet their calculated daily energy requirement (DER) every day. Hyporexia and

anorexia are common in veterinary cancer patients. Tumor location such as oral, esophageal, stomach, and GI track tumors can be potential causes. Changes in taste and smell, potential side effects of chemotherapy which may last for weeks or months, may also be the cause.²⁰ As such, the patient's daily energy requirement (DER) may be affected by multiple factors. While at home, the general recommendation is to use a coefficient of 1.25 to 2 for dogs and 1.25 to 1.5 for cats.²¹ While hospitalized, the patients resting energy requirement (RER) is generally sufficient. However, patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy may require additional calories to avoid weight and muscle loss, thus multiplying the patients RER by a factor of 1.1 to 2.0 may be necessary.

Homemade and Raw Diets

As previously mentioned, people with cancer often look to non-conventional therapies, supplements, organic and homeopathic remedies for themselves and for their pets. Therefore, it is not surprising that an increasing number of pet owners are looking to feed non-conventional diets such as fresh, homecooked, and raw pet foods. An Internet search for pet food recipes for dogs and cats with cancer results in many options to choose from. Unfortunately, these homemade diets are not regulated and do not require any proof to validate their claims.

Recipes for homemade pet food should be used with caution unless formulated by a board-certified veterinary nutritionist. This is especially important when feeding the veterinarian cancer patient. Most homemade pet food diet recipes found in books, articles, and online are not complete and balanced. These homemade recipes may be contraindicated for pets' cancer, even recipes claiming to have been created for that specific condition.

Patients requiring a homemade diet should be referred to a board-certified veterinary nutritionist for a consult and diet formulation. Many nutritionists offer



Offering food of a different texture such as pate, shreds, “stew,” and “in gravy” varieties will sometimes spark a finicky dog or cats’ appetite.

phone and online appointments for clients referred by primary care veterinarians. Referring veterinarians will complete a referral that includes a diet history of the patient in addition to known health problems and medical records. The client is also asked to complete and submit a complete diet history prior to the consult with the nutritionist.

It is important to remember that there is an increased risk of bacterial and parasitic contamination associated with raw meat diets²² as compared to conventional commercially available pet food. Raw diets are not recommended for cancer patients, especially immunocompromised patients such as those undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Cancer Cachexia

Cachexia is a wasting condition of muscle and fat which frequently leads to anorexia although anorexia alone is not the sole cause. The metabolic disturbances associated with cancer cachexia are the body’s response to the tumor and the tumor attempting to grow and spread. These metabolic changes lead to anorexia, weight loss, fatigue, reduced immune function, and malnutrition. In veterinary cancer, cachexia patients’ malnutrition may occur

before clinical signs—even weight loss—are seen. The prevalence and diagnosis cancer cachexia has been reported to affect 30 to 85% of human cancer patients and is the cause of death in 20% of human cancer patients.²³ Similar studies have not been published for veterinary patients. However, anecdotally, the prevalence seems to follow a similar rate in veterinary patients in advanced stages of cancer.²⁴ Appetite stimulants effectively used to treat anorexia may not work to improve the appetite in patients suffering from cachexia. However, supplementing the diet with fish oils and vitamin E may be beneficial.

Coaxing

It may be necessary to hand feed a dog or cat dealing with a cancer diagnosis. Hand feeding may be enough to encourage a dog or cat to eat. However, force feeding has been associated with food aversions and should be avoided. Top dressing with a small amount of a canned food, canned pumpkin, warmed low sodium chicken or beef broth, tuna juice, shredded cheese, or a sprinkle of parmesan cheese can encourage food intake. A sprinkle of brown sugar, honey, or maple syrup for dogs and a touch of salt for cats are options worth trying to get them to eat. Offering

food of a different texture such as pate, shreds, “stew,” and “in gravy” varieties will sometimes spark a finicky dog or cats’ appetite. Kibble of a new shape or size can also be considered for both cats and dogs. Dogs and cats that have been vomiting, nauseated, or feeling unwell may sometimes associate their regular foods with feeling sick. In some cases, simply trying a different variety, flavor, or another brand may get them eating again.

Pharmacological Intervention

Appetite stimulants have been shown to be effective to increase food intake, promote weight gain, and reduce muscle loss in some veterinary patients. Unfortunately, these are often not prescribed in the initial stages of hyporexia. Veterinary technicians can advocate that a licensed veterinarian consider prescribing an appetite stimulant at the first sign of inappetence rather than waiting until the patient has completely stopped eating.

There are a few appetite stimulant options that can be tried to encourage eating. Oral mirtazapine has been used as an appetite stimulant in veterinary patients for many years. A study published in 2011²⁵ showed cats receiving a 1.88 mg dose of oral mirtazapine once daily voluntarily ate significantly more food than did the cats in the control group who were given placebo. Those receiving a 3.75 mg dose once daily did not consume an increased amount of food compared to those receiving the lower dose, however significantly more side effects, including increased vocalization and activity were documented. Based on this study, a 1.88 mg dose is recommended

as the initial starting dose which can be given as frequently as daily in young healthy cats. Sufficient studies on the effectiveness and safety of oral mirtazapine in dogs are not available at this time. Anecdotally, oral mirtazapine does not seem to be as effective in stimulating appetite in dogs as it is in cats. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved a transdermal mirtazapine ointment to manage unintended weight loss in cats. Studies have documented the effectiveness and safety of this treatment, even when given long-term.²⁶ Anecdotally, this author believes that that the transdermal product is more effective than the oral.

Another relatively new product containing capromorelin, a ghrelin receptor agonist, has been FDA approved for appetite stimulation in dogs and a similar product has been FDA approved for the management of weight loss in cats with chronic kidney disease. Studies have shown that both of these relatively new options are effective and safe to be used long-term.^{27,28}

What if the patient is in pain? A pain score should be conducted. Advocate for analgesia with the attending veterinarian, if indicated. Pharmacological intervention should not be a last-ditch effort! Veterinary nurses and technicians, as patient advocates, should remind veterinarians when patients may benefit from pain control and/or an appetite stimulant. Also, watch for signs of nausea, such as drooling or looking away from food when

offered. Anti-nausea medication should be prescribed when nausea is suspected.

Assisted Enteral Feeding

Nasogastric and nasoesophageal tubes are useful for patients who are unwilling to or are unable to eat but have normal GI function. Placement does not require anesthesia. Using a topical anesthetic, and/or mild sedation, is generally sufficient. These tubes are used short-term and are sometimes used until the patient is stable enough to be anesthetized for a longer-term feeding tube placement. One disadvantage is that the diameter of the tubes is small – these are appropriate for insertion thru the nostril, but only allows for liquid diets to be fed.

Esophagostomy, gastrostomy, and jejunostomy tubes are larger in diameter and allow for a variety of commercially available canned options blenderized with additional water to be fed. These can be used long term for owners to administer bolus feedings and medications at home. Surgical placement under general anesthesia is required for placement. Proactive placement should be considered before beginning treatment which may affect the patient's ability or willingness to eat. Feeding tube placement should be considered especially if surgery is being performed to remove tumors, to obtain surgical biopsies, etc.

Assisted feeding should be started if a patient has not voluntarily consumed enough calories to meet their resting energy requirement for three or more days.

Parenteral Nutrition

Parenteral nutrition (PN) (an intravenous solution for providing nutrition) is generally reserved for patients who cannot tolerate enteral feeding. Parenteral nutrition must be compounded and may not be readily available to many veterinary hospitals other than larger referral hospitals. Commercially available PN solutions for people are not designed to meet the needs of animals and may not provide adequate nutritional support. In some cases, premade glucose and amino acid solution may be used short-term until the patient is stable enough to undergo general anesthesia for feeding tube placement or begins to eat on its own. The use of PN in veterinary patients has been associated with a risk of infection and intestinal atrophy, with subsequent risk of bacterial translocation, increased rate of sepsis; and metabolic complications such as hyperglycemia (particularly in cats), blood electrolyte abnormalities, and hyperlipidemia can occur. Aseptic technique is required, and extreme care should be taken with the handling and administration of parenteral nutrition as contaminated PN can become an excellent growth medium for bacteria. A study by Jensen, et al. (2014) showed patients receiving PN that were also trickle fed had a higher survival rate than those receiving PN only. Due to the risk of potential complications, the difficulty in obtaining and the high cost of providing parenteral nutrition, enteral feeding remains the preferred method for most

ED CARLSON, CVT, VTS (NUTRITION)

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acute pancreatitis patients. If parenteral nutrition is used, the recommendation is to begin trickle feeding as soon as the patient will tolerate it and gradually increase the enteral feeding.²⁹

Nutritional Recommendation

The goal of making a nutritional recommendation is to provide the patient with the best possible diet to meet their specific nutritional needs as they receive treatment for cancer. How you, as a veterinary nurse or technician, communicate a nutritional recommendation can be a factor in how willing the client might be to accepting your recommendations. Be sure to document in the patient record the specifics of your recommendation, even if no changes are being made. The nutritional recommendation should include the brand, variety, and specific formula of the food you are recommending, as well as the amount to feed, the frequency of feedings, and when to any changes to the feeding plan may be needed.

Conclusion

Feeding the veterinarian cancer patient a complete and balanced diet and ensuring that their caloric requirements are met can be challenging considering that decreased appetite is common, especially in advanced stages of the disease. Additional clinical trials are needed to determine the specific nutritional requirements for dogs and cats with different types of cancer. However, current research supports the use of foods that contain increased amounts of fat and protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and reduced levels of carbohydrates. Homemade diet recipes should

be used with caution, many found online are not appropriate for dogs and cats with cancer. A board-certified veterinary nutritionist should be consulted if a homemade diet is needed or requested by the client. Following these guidelines and recommendations may provide a significant reduction in the disease while also improving the animal's quality of life. **J**

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LET'S REVIEW...

1. Current research supports feeding the veterinary cancer patient:

- a. A diet containing increased amounts of carbohydrates and reduced levels of fat and protein, omega-3 fatty acid.
- b. A homemade diet made from a receipt found on the internet
- c. A raw meat diet
- d. A diet containing increased amounts of fat and protein, omega-3 fatty acid reduced levels of carbohydrates.

2. For Clients who want to feed a veterinary cancer patient a homemade diet,

- a. Recommend a consult with a board-certified veterinary nutritionist to create an appropriate recipe
- b. Recommend they do an online search for homemade diets for dogs or cats with cancer
- c. Recommend they feed their pet some of what they cook for their family
- d. Recommend they find a book of homemade diet receipts at the local bookstore or library

3. An FDA-approved appetite stimulant should be considered for the veterinary cancer patient:

- a. Once they have stopped eating completely
- b. Are contraindicate for cancer patients and should never be prescribed
- c. At first sign on inappetence
- d. Are contraindicate for cancer patients and should only be prescribed if their owner insists

4. Many dogs and cats with cancer:

- a. Have an increased appetite, consume excessive amounts of calories, and should be fed a diet low in calories
- b. Have a decreased appetite and consume less calories. Feed a highly palatable, energy dense food is recommended.
- c. Have no change in appetite and should be fed an adult maintenance diet
- d. Have no change in appetite and should be fed a raw meat diet

5. Antioxidants, herbal and other supplements:

- a. May interact with other drugs, including chemotherapeutic agents, and should be used with caution in veterinary cancer patients
- b. Are harmless and safe for all veterinary cancer patients
- c. Are recommended by oncologists for veterinary cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy.
- d. Should be administered to all veterinary cancer patients



TUITION FOR TECHNICIANS

THE WINNING ESSAYS

In 2022, NAVTA and Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health USA Inc established the Tuition for Veterinary Technicians Scholarship program to help meet the increased need for credentialed veterinary technicians in the animal health industry.

In October, 20 Veterinary Technician students were each awarded \$2,500 in tuition assistance. As part of their application, each recipient had to submit a 500-word essay that addressed the following subject(s):

- **Where do you see the future of the veterinary technology/nursing profession 5-10 years from now?**
- **How will you contribute to the veterinary technology/nursing profession?**
- **What are your career goals?**

Of the 20 award winners, six received perfect scores on their essays. Essays were assessed on a scale of “Poor” to “Outstanding” using the following criteria:

- Grammar & mechanics
- Sentence structure
- Ideas
- Organization
- Completeness & clarity
- Understanding

NAVTA is proud to publish the winning essays here, with permission from each of the authors.

JUDE FLORES

Planting Deep Roots in Veterinary Technology

On social media of all places, I once read that “aspens grow tall to reach the sun. Dandelions grow deep so that if some misguided fool tries to uproot them, they’d have to try hard. And then there’s thyme and creeping plants. If you chop a part off, it roots wherever it can find dirt.” I relate strongly to this sentiment and see my approach to work, school, and life as that of the deep-rooted dandelion. From my own future to that of the veterinary technology profession itself and the part of it I aspire to contribute to, the idea of never being uprooted guides every moving part of my vision.

Five to 10 years from now, I can see myself entering the emergency clinic I work at knowing that any patient that rushes through our doors can be promised an excellent standard of nursing care because even the greenest technician has built the foundation provided by veterinary technology school, retained the information to pass a board exam, and kept up with their continuing education hours with the capability to specialize in what we do. With title protection and two seats for technicians on the State Board of Veterinary Medicine recently won in my home state, I see a more defined scope of practice developing over the next decade as new obstacles in doing things the unregulated way come up in practice. I consequently see these changes leading to more public appreciation of what veterinary technicians contribute as that information ceases to conflict from practice to practice.

One way I will contribute to the profession is by helping bring advanced nursing to my workplace. I’m proud to be a veterinary assistant at an emergency practice that prioritizes accessibility and is beloved by our community. However, I work with senior credentialed technicians who are stuck in a cycle of having specialist applications rejected for not including enough advanced nursing cases. Change comes from within, and I want to do my part to make this great clinic greater by sharpening my nursing practice like these individuals so that as more

technicians can be entrusted with critical cases, we will be able to save more of our most vulnerable patients and empower our technicians to pursue advancement without needing a second job.

My career goals see me on the floor with emergent and critical patients. Plunging into a packed treatment area, telling the daytime team they can exit the chaos knowing everything will get done, and helping animals who might not have made it until morning make the overnight shift at an emergency practice rewarding even as an assistant. Like the coworkers I look up to, I also aspire to keep learning and experiencing to meet the requirements for specialization through AVECCTN.

The common thread between all of these is that they require long-term dedication. The results of that dedication are depth of knowledge, of skill set, and of entrenchment in communities great and small. Deep roots are my goal for my career and for the greater veterinary technology profession, for they are hard to pull from their place.

JENNYBETH KAPUR

I have been a teacher, a tutor, a case manager, a foster parent—but not until 2018, when I started volunteering at a local animal rescue, did I discover my true passion. Being around the tough yet compassionate people that do the grueling work of shelter medicine, watching unwanted pets thrive in new environments, and connecting humans with animals through the adoption process has brought me a joy and fulfillment that I did not experience in other jobs.

Being involved with the medical foster team at the rescue, inspired me to become a credentialed veterinary technician. It is a privilege to sit in a classroom and dive deep into anatomy, hematology, and yes, even parasitology. Connecting classroom learning to my real-world experiences has only furthered my interest in pursuing shelter medicine. The burden is great in North Carolina. I want to give back to my community in a field that desperately needs trained, competent caregivers to meet the needs of shelter animals. With such a high rate of turnover and staffing needs, I want to step into this role and take on the challenge of doing the hard work that is shelter medicine. There will be many opportunities to educate the public, other veterinary professionals and politicians. I hope to be an advocate and see positive change in my lifetime.

Personally, I am always striving to be a positive and helpful individual in any arena. I take pleasure in learning new things and collaborating with a team to achieve goals. I will continue to be a learner, leader and champion at my future workplace. Specifically, I would like to participate in the accreditation of a Shelter Medicine Academy through NAVTA. The Association of Shelter Medicine Veterinary Technicians (ASMVT) has allowed me to join as a student and I will be an ally for their mission. Rescues and shelters are staffed with individuals that know how to be innovative, make difficult decisions, and stretch resources—all the while dealing with multiple species, governmental statutes, and an unsympathetic public. It is an expertise that deserves recognition. I can also envision myself moving into academia. My current instructors have been true inspirations and lead-learners. One day, I would like to encourage and educate the next generation of veterinary professionals.

“Standardizing the Profession” is a hot topic right now. This is the first imperative step towards the other goals our profession aims to achieve. But, in my opinion, client education is equally important. If the clients, who are paying for the services and preventive care, are the ones that keep clinics operational by their patronage, then we should be focusing on making sure they understand the critical role

The unique skills and expertise found in a great technician are valuable to the clinics and the animals they care for. If the clients respect the veterinary technician role and demand them in their clinics, then the providers will need to make hiring credentialed and qualified staff a priority.

that technicians play. The unique skills and expertise found in a great technician are valuable to the clinics and the animals they care for. If the clients respect the veterinary technician role and demand them in their clinics, then the providers will need to make hiring credentialed and qualified staff a priority. I believe that pay increases and respect will follow. Another change I expect to see in the future is an increase in utilization. Based on a study done by RVTs Heather Prendergast and Kenichiro Yagi, technicians self-report to only being utilized at 30% to 40% of their skill level. That leaves huge growth potential and will only benefit the clinics both financially and culturally. Allowing technicians to perform higher level skills can free up veterinarians to do what they are specifically trained and able to perform. One dilemma our profession faces is hitting a professional ceiling. Some credentialed technicians do not see room for growth in the field and they may leave for opportunities in human medicine or other sciences. I feel that this can be addressed with some additions to designations within veterinary nursing. For example, as in human medicine, there could be a master’s level “nurse practitioner” technician that would be able to diagnose and treat general practice needs. Not only is this a revenue boost, but also alleviates the workload for the DVM who can then focus on special cases, surgery and having a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, strong and seasoned technicians would stay in the field, thus reducing loss to burn-out and lack of growth.

Being an active part of the animal medicine community is my goal. I feel that I still have so much to learn, but I also have so much to give. I want to be part of the change that happens over the next few years. Thank you for this opportunity to share my goals and future contributions to the profession of veterinary technology. I look forward to a career with so many possibilities

EMILY LEMP

I never thought that after accepting my dream job working with rhinos, zebras, and elephants, I would dare to leave the world of zoo-keeping. Once I began interacting with the Little Rock Zoo's veterinary staff, those thoughts changed. Being a zookeeper, I often interacted with the veterinarian staff, frequently acting as an extra set of hands when needed. I would be tasked with helping restrain a flamingo to treat its bumblefoot or help to administer intravenous fluids to a sick anteater. I developed a good friendship with the technician on the team, and he helped me realize that this was a path I wanted to follow: to become a veterinary technician.

Four years ago, I couldn't have told you what a veterinary technician was or what they did. I assumed that a veterinary practice was staffed with receptionists, vet assistants, and the veterinarian. However, meeting technicians has opened my eyes to an integral role in the veterinary world that is sorely underappreciated by the average person and one that is not always utilized to its full potential.

I think that in the coming years NAVTA will succeed in its push for policy change regarding the field. With that change, veterinary technicians will be recognized as what they are: veterinary nurses. Once veterinary technicians are regulated as their own class and given the title they deserve, public appreciation will increase and there will be a better understanding of the role. These same sentiments will carry into the workplace. The title of "nurse" will stand as a reminder of the abilities technicians possess. This new support will help to solve the problem of underutilization that stifles and burns out many technicians today and will lead to a higher standard of medical care.

That high standard of care is what I can offer to the veterinary technology field. Leading keeper chats developed the interpretation skills that I will utilize in the clinic setting, where I can educate clients on how to improve their pets' wellbeing. In my time as a zookeeper, I have gained unique and valuable experiences that have influenced my animal care standards. Animals need us to act as their voice. Zoo life instilled a fiery passion and deep understanding of education, care, and welfare that will translate well into my role as a certified veterinary technician.

I still have a great love for zoos. I miss helping the veterinarian keep track of

which zebra is which while she darts them for their yearly vaccinations. In addition to my schooling, I visit the zoo as often as I can to learn from the veterinary staff. I hope to return to the zoo field after earning my stripes in private practice as a CVT. Ultimately, my overarching career goal is to help animals under my care not only meet their basic needs but help them surpass those basic needs and thrive.

KAYLA PLUCINSKI

As a veterinary technician student entering my fifth and final semester, I am very excited to see the future of this profession grow as I continue to do so. Because veterinary medicine is always an ever-growing field, there is no shortage of possibilities for the nursing side of the profession. Within 5-10 years, I see more technicians in the field and veterinary technician programs growing at a steady rate. This will not only help the profession become better staffed, but I think it will also help the high rate of "burnout" we have in the veterinary medicine field. Not a lot of people understand the high rate of "burnout" that we see in this field. It is a tough field to work in due to the type of cases we see, the long grueling hours of working in a clinic, and sometimes even the clients we work with. In my opinion, the patients we see make up for this.

My plans to contribute to the veterinary technology profession have already begun. Not just because I am in school but because of the volunteer work I am partaking in. In the Fall of 2019, I met a Mille Lacs Tribal First Responder, Monte. Monte invited me to come over to the Mille Lacs Ojibwe reservation in Minnesota that November to participate in a Spay and Neuter Clinic that is put on by a student organization (SIRVS – Student Initiative for Reservation Veterinary Services) at the University of Minnesota. This experience helped plant the seed for an even deeper love of veterinary medicine.

Since then, I have volunteered at an additional four SIRVS Clinics. Through these clinics, I have gained so much valuable experience that I have been able to bring back to school and put into practice at labs and other places.

More recently, I have helped start a group with other Native Americans in the veterinary medicine field, Natives in VetMed. Right now, this group meets monthly to discuss what we, as Native Americans, can do to improve the field we work in. Our main focus is to breakdown the barriers we see in order to encourage more Native Americans to use veterinary care and ultimately, work in our field of veterinary medicine. This is a fairly new movement, but it is something that is very important to me.

I would like to take this last little bit to share with you my career goals. As of now, I am very excited to begin my career in a small animal or mixed clinic somewhere in the Midwest. I love working in a clinic setting but see myself wanting to possibly do something a little different in the future. I would really love to teach and be part of a veterinary technician program. Working as an instructor would allow me to share my passion with future vet techs and instill a love for the field in a new generation of professionals in the veterinary medicine field.

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STEPHANIE VAN HORN

The Veterinary Technician/Nursing profession has ample potential for growth in the upcoming 5-10 years. Following the path of human nurses, I am hopeful that we will be able to strive for improved respect, pay, hours, education, and title. The first step for this crucial development is currently in process by NAVTA to work towards changing the title to “Veterinary Nurse” and require licensing to practice in all 50 states. I believe the next step would be to standardize the licensing exam across all states. Ideally, once this is established, the education requirements for programs preparing for the exam would increase and a Bachelors in Veterinary Nursing would become more common in universities. This would lead to higher wages and improved respect/understanding of the responsibilities of Veterinary Nurses by the general public. With these advancements in place, recruitment and retention would improve significantly and lead to better hours and working conditions for all involved. Within the universities, specialization education opportunities may become available to students which would allow for new options for personal career growth and areas where Veterinary Nurses are employed. I feel very optimistic about the potential for Veterinary Nurses career development over the next 5-10 years and beyond.

I feel that I have much to offer the Veterinary Nursing profession. I am a student member of NAVTA and plan to be more active in the organization after graduation. As previously mentioned, I have an interest in assisting in the Veterinary Nurse Initiative. I believe that there is more we can do to escalate this movement and the current timeline. For one, I believe we need to get public support on our side and create an updated, engaging video explaining the urgent need for improvement in the field. As shown by NOMV and the high turnover rate, we cannot afford to wait years or decades for slow change. I have a degree in biology, a minor in psychology, have performed and presented findings of multiple research experiments to judges at conferences, and worked professional jobs in scientific research. Therefore, I believe my extensive experience in research and human understanding would be an asset to NAVTA's initiatives.

My personal career goals are continuously growing and changing as I work through my program. I have interest in research, wildlife/zoological medicine, and general practice. My enthusiasm for the field has grown, as I near the end of my 18-month program, and I am thrilled to see where my opportunities and passion may take me. In the past few years, I have struggled to overcome personal obstacles such as \$80,000 in student loan debt, lack of help from the government or estranged family, recently diagnosed and treated ADHD, and other unexpected hurdles to my original life and career paths. This scholarship would greatly assist me to continue to create a stable path forward and follow my passion for the welfare of both humans and animals alike. I would strive to repay this generosity by working hard to enhance the field of Veterinary Nursing.

CHONG SU VIA

My name is Chong Su Via, and I am from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I am a veterinary nursing student currently enrolled in Purdue's Veterinary Nursing Distance Learning programme. I work full time as a veterinary assistant in a 24 hours referral veterinary hospital, one of the biggest and busiest veterinary practice in the country. I have been a veterinary assistant for 5 years, and recently found my passion in anaesthesia, emergency and critical care. I understand that one of the criteria for application is that I must be a full time veterinary nursing student enrolled in an AVMA accredited veterinary nursing school. Even though I am only a part time student, I sincerely hope you can make an exception for me as I am passionately in love with my profession, and I hope my essay below is able to convince you that I am worthy of consideration for the scholarship. The reason for my part time student status is because I work 12-14 hours daily, 7 days a week, at the veterinary hospital. I absolutely love my profession and my patients that I have the privilege of nursing and caring for.

Unbelievable as it is, in my country of Malaysia, being a certified vet nurse is unheard of. In the eyes of the law, under the government veterinary department, a veterinary nurse simply does not exist. Legally, all medical procedures and care are performed by veterinarians in a veterinary establishment. Having no certified and educated veterinary nurses, patient's care and welfare are often in a state of neglect. The veterinarians are inundated with the entire aspect of veterinary medical care for each and every patient, above having to perform surgeries and consults as well. Veterinary assistants in my country couldn't do more than just restraining and cleaning.

So I decided to take matters into my own hands. This year, I have gathered several veterinarians and veterinary assistants for a collaboration to establish the country's first veterinary nursing association. Our association, MAVNA, which stands for Malaysian

I see the future of the veterinary nursing profession in my country in the next 5-10 years is for veterinary nurses to be recognized and respected as professionals and as an integral part of every veterinary establishment

Association of Veterinary Nurses and Assistants, will strive for recognition of our profession, and to emphasize the importance of certified, credentialed, educated, veterinary nurses in a veterinary establishment. We have approached several education institutes in Malaysia in hopes to establish the first veterinary nursing school in Malaysia for the veterinary assistants who wish to obtain certification but simply could not afford an overseas distance learning programme.

I see the future of the veterinary nursing profession in my country in the next 5-10 years is for veterinary nurses to be recognized and respected as professionals and as an integral part of every veterinary establishment. Educated, professionally trained veterinary nurses not only lightens the burden and duty of the veterinarian, the quality of patient's care and welfare can also be improved significantly.

My personal career goals that I strive for is to obtain a vet tech specialty in emergency and critical care, and anaesthesia, and someday, to achieve a University of Edinburgh Master's degree in Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia.

The sky is the limit and I will fight till my last breath for the recognition of professional veterinary nursing in Malaysia.

The Journey to Becoming a **VETERINARY TECHNICIAN SPECIALIST (CVTS)**

Vicky L. Ograin, MBA, RVT,
VTS (Nutrition)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

As a result of reading this article you will learn:

- The history of the Veterinary Technician Specialties
- What is the difference between a society and an academy?
- How to form a new VTS academy
- Requirements to submit an application to become a VTS
- Tips for obtaining a VTS
- Recertification
- What are the current VTS academies

Introduction

Credentialed veterinary technicians can obtain a higher level of recognition for advanced knowledge and skills in specific discipline, by becoming a veterinary technician specialist. Currently there are 16 different academies to pick from. Academies develop advanced pathways, which a candidate must follow and complete in order to be awarded the designation of VTS (Veterinary Technician Specialist) in their specific discipline. If you have always had a dream to become a specialist pick what you are passionate about and go for it. Becoming a VTS is hard work, but well worth it.

Due to a growing interest among veterinary technicians to attain a

higher level of recognition for advanced knowledge and skills in specific disciplines, NAVTA developed the Committee on Veterinary Technician Specialties (CVTS). The committee provides a standardized list of criteria and assistance for groups interested in attaining academy status.

History of the Veterinary Technician Specialties

The National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) developed the Committee on Veterinary Technician Specialties (CVTS) in 1994 and it is recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association. The CVTS provides guidelines to veterinary technician organizations to facilitate the formation of a veterinary technician specialty academy and additional subspecialties. Academies develop advanced pathways, which a candidate must follow and complete in order to

This program was reviewed and approved by the AAVSB RACE program for 1 hour of continuing education in jurisdictions which recognize AAVSB RACE approval. Please contact the AAVSB RACE program if you have any comments/concerns regarding this program's validity or relevancy to the veterinary profession.



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¹Logan EI, Finney O, Hefferren JJ. Effects of a dental food on plaque accumulation and gingival health in dogs. *J Vet Dent.* 2002;19(1):15-18.
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be awarded the designation of VTS (Veterinary Technician Specialist) in their specific discipline. The CVTS also reviews academy reports yearly and for full recognition to assure compliance of policy and procedures. The first technician academy, the Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians (AVECCT), was recognized in 1996. This first academy has set the groundwork for all the rest of the academies.¹ Currently, as of 2022 there are 16 veterinary technician academies.

Starting the VTS Journey

If you are thinking about pursuing a veterinary technician specialty, you first need to think about why you want to become a veterinary technician specialist. This is the same as when we decided to become a credentialed veterinary technician. When thinking about starting the journey to become a veterinary technician specialist. It needs to be your passion.

When I was at a point in my career when I was thinking about what I wanted to do, getting a VTS was at the top of my list. But I needed to think about which specialty I wanted to pursue. Nutrition has always been my passion. There is one patient that confirmed my passion for nutrition and made me realize this was what I wanted to specialize in. The patient was my own cat, Slick. I adopted Slick when he was 4 months old and he was perfect, no health issues at all. Unfortunately, at 1.5 years old he did not seem right. He did not eat half of



The author's cat Slick, who inspired her to become a VTS.

his dinner one night and the fur on his rear legs looked a little greasy, like he was not grooming. I was sure he had kidney issues; I knew him so well. After lab work and a biopsy, he was diagnosed with glomerulonephritis (kidney failure) and was given two months to live. The veterinarian said we could try a therapeutic renal food, but they were not optimistic it would help. I have also had an interest in nutrition, so I decided to try it. Slick needed to eat, and I felt nutrition could help. We started him on a renal therapeutic food. With the power of nutrition, he lived ten years. He was also given medications at the beginning of his disease, but for most of the 10 years he was only on the therapeutic renal food. It was such an honor to go through the journey with Slick and to see how he had ten great years, with a high quality of life. I then started counseling other pet owners that had cats with glomerulonephritis and then became the nutritional counselor at the practice I was at. Seeing the power of nutrition sealed my passion and I knew that nutrition was what I wanted to dedicate my career to. Unfortunately, at the time there was no nutrition specialty, so when I heard there was a group forming a nutrition specialty, I knew this was the specialty for me. I had the honor of helping to form the nutrition academy.

When you are thinking about what academy you may want to pursue, think about what your passion is. Was there a patient that you helped with that fueled your passion for a particular specialty? It is important to have a discussion with the veterinarian(s) and/or supervisor(s) at your place of work. It is important to have their support, or it may be difficult to accomplish the requirements. After you have the support of management, then a discussion with the rest of the staff is important to help your journey be successful. There is going to be extra work and time needed to accomplish the requirements, so you need everyone to support and encourage you to be successful. You will need advanced cases

for your application and having the support of everyone will facilitate them making sure you know when an advanced case comes in.

Can obtaining a veterinary technician specialty result in a pay increase? According to a study published in 2016, 351 veterinary technician specialists completed a 2013 survey on wages. The results of the survey showed that pay was higher for a veterinary technician specialist than a non-veterinary technician specialist credentialed technician, but the higher wage was also influenced by gender, length of time at the job and position. Obtaining a veterinary technician specialty may result in an increase in pay, but it will depend on the place of business and the specific situation.² It could result in new job opportunities, especially if relocation is an option. It can also benefit your current place of employment, since you are an expert in your specialty, and you can bring advanced skills to the practice. If the clinic is not doing the advanced skills required by the academy this is a perfect opportunity to speak to the veterinarian, let them know you are working on a veterinary technician specialty, and you would like to bring in advanced skills. This will benefit the practice or place of employment.

Society vs an Academy (VTS)

If you are not ready or have not met the requirements for a veterinary technician specialty you may want to join a society. A society is a membership association for a specific discipline of veterinary

medicine, like behavior, nutrition, etc. A society is for like-minded people and may be open to all in the healthcare team. This is a terrific way to meet other like-minded individuals and may help you decide if this is the specialty for you.

An academy is for veterinary technicians who receive recognition in a specific specialty and is restricted to credentialed veterinary technicians, who must complete a formal process of continuing education, training, experience, and testing to qualify.

New Academies

If you look at the list of current academies and you do not see one that interests you, and you have a passion in a field of veterinary medicine that does not have a specialty representing it yet, then you may want to start a new academy. This is what I did when I helped start the nutrition specialty. To start an academy, first you need to find a number of like-minded credentialed technicians with the same passion for the specialty. This group will be the organizing committee and will do the work to start the academy. You will need to go to the NAVTA web site where the guidelines are located; the guidelines will have all the requirements to submit a petition to the CVTS.

Requirements to be on an organizing committee

First a letter of intent, with required information, is submitted to the CVTS, letting them know your intent to submit

a petition. A NAVTA liaison is appointed to represent the group. The petition needs to be submitted within 12 months of submitting the letter of intent. A formal petition is submitted to the CVTS for review, with the ultimate approval coming from the NAVTA Executive board.

The organizing committee is responsible for developing the specialty academy. This includes completing the petitioning process to CVTS and all other work necessary to begin credentialing specialists in the designated area. The petition must show that there is a need for the specialty and must align with a recognized AVMA specialty college.

Organizing committee members must be credentialed technicians and a member of NAVTA. The organization needs to be incorporated as a non-profit organization. They need to be recognized as exceptionally qualified specialists in their field, with a minimum of seven years of experience in the specialty, with no less than 75% of time spent being devoted to the specialty. Exceptionally qualified specialists are defined as individuals who produce scholarly work within the specialty area. Examples of scholarly work include a combination of teaching, lecturing, peer reviewed work, research, or consulting. There is also a continuing education requirement, as well as other requirements. I recommend looking at the NAVTA website (www.NAVTA.net) for the guidelines for the requirements.³

Requirements to obtain a VTS

If you are thinking about pursuing an established academy, first look at the academy's skills list, these are the skills that are required in a certain percentage that need to be completed to demonstrate advance mastery of the skills in your selected specialty. These are skills that you are proficient at and have done a number of times, with a high level of success and expertise.

Box 1 details a general list of academy application requirements. Each academy has individual but similar requirements.

BOX 1. Specialty Academy General Application Requirements

- Be a credentialed technician.
- Provide proof of certification, sign a waiver, release and indemnity agreement form.
- Complete a professional history and employment form.
- Complete a number of hours over a designated number of years working in your specialty.
- Complete the advanced skills list, signed by the accepted signer (DVM, VTS, etc.).
- Provide documentary evidence of advanced competence in the selected area of specialization by submitting a number case logs and case reports.
- Specific number of hours of continuing education in the specialty must be completed.
- Letters of recommendation.
- Some also require examination questions.

For the academy you are interested in, it is recommended that you review the academy's website and speak to the academy to make sure you fully understand the application requirements.

There is an application fee that needs to be paid and if the application is accepted an examination fee needs to be paid. Once the requirements are completed an application packet is submitted to the academy. If accepted an exam will be given. Veterinary technicians who have met all requirements as stipulated by a recognized academy shall be known as Veterinary Technician Specialists, VTS, with the specialty designated thereafter.

Tips for obtaining a VTS

Contact the academy to see if they have a mentor program, the mentors are typically a veterinary technician specialist in the academy. It is advised to use a VTS mentor

have just obtained a different veterinary technician specialty.⁴

if the academy has them, since they can help navigate the process of the application. Spelling and grammar need to be exceptional, so having a proofreader is recommended. Seek feedback from the veterinarians or experts you work with.

Before starting the journey, research the requirements. Check the academy website; this is your best resource for the requirements of the academy you want to pursue. Join any social media they may have, like Facebook, Instagram, twitter, etc. Ask questions; do not think you are on this journey by yourself. The academies are there to help you.

Recertification

After obtaining your veterinary technician specialty you will need to maintain your veterinary technician specialty. Most academies recertify every 5 years. Check with the academy to see what their requirements are. Academies can require a certain number of hours of continuing education as well as other requirements; for example, speaking, publishing, or volunteering with the academy on the board or on a committee.

Academies approved by NAVTA

Currently there are sixteen academies; with as of 2022 just over 1400 veterinary technician specialist being awarded, some technicians have more than one VTS. A full list of current members can be found on the NAVTA website. It has the credentialed vet tech's name, specialty(s), and year of accreditation. This is a great resource to use to verify if a vet tech is a veterinary technician specialist or for an academy to make sure a vet tech is not trying to submit an application if they



1) The Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians and Nurses (AVECCT)

This was the first academy recognized. The academy advances veterinary technicians working within the disciplines of veterinary emergency and critical care. The academy's goal is to assure the veterinary profession and the public that AVECCT certified technicians possess the knowledge and experience needed to work effectively in a well-equipped and staffed emergency or critical care facility. Encourage research in emergency and critical care nursing and continuing education in emergency critical care. Their mission statement is: "To advance emergency and critical care veterinary nurses and technicians through certification and standards of excellence." The academy was recognized in 1996.⁵ For more information visit the academy website at www.avecct.org.



2) The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Anesthesia and Analgesia (AVTAA)

The AVTAA will advance veterinary technicians working within the disciplines of veterinary anesthesia and analgesia. The academy objectives are to develop requirements and to provide an examination resulting in a VTS in anesthesia and Analgesia. Their mission statement is: "The Academy of

Veterinary Technicians in Anesthesia and Analgesia exists to promote interest in the discipline of veterinary anesthesia and analgesia. The Academy will provide a process by which veterinary technicians may become certified as Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) in Anesthesia and Analgesia; VTS (Anesthesia and Analgesia). The Academy will provide the opportunity for members to enhance their knowledge and skills in veterinary anesthesia and analgesia. The Veterinary Technician who becomes credentialed as a VTS (Anesthesia and Analgesia) demonstrates superior knowledge in the care and management of anesthesia cases while providing appropriate analgesia. Certification as a VTS (Anesthesia and Analgesia) promotes patient safety, consumer protection, professionalism, and excellence in anesthesia care. The Veterinary Anesthesia arena is constantly evolving; thus, the attainment of competence and specialization is a continual activity." The academy was recognized in 1999.⁶ For more information visit the academy website at www.avta-vts.org.

3) The Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians (AVDT)

The AVDT will advance veterinary technicians working within the disciplines of veterinary dentistry. The academy gives the technicians the opportunity to expand their knowledge and their professional value by becoming a credentialed specialist in the field of animal dentistry. The academy statement of purpose is: "The Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians (AVDT) exists to promote excellence in the discipline of veterinary dentistry. The AVDT will provide a process by which credentialed veterinary technicians may become certified as a Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) in the field of dentistry. The veterinary technician who becomes



certified as a VTS (Dentistry) will demonstrate superior knowledge of veterinary dentistry while promoting welfare for the companion animal. The AVDT will advance the skills of veterinary technicians within the discipline of dentistry through continuing education and journal articles. The AVDT benefits the veterinarian, veterinary technician, and companion animal caregiver. The AVDT operates under the direct approval and guidance of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA).” The academy was established in 2000.⁷ For more information visit the academy website at www.avdt.us.



4) The Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians (AIMVT) –

The AIMVT will advance veterinary technicians working within the disciplines of veterinary internal medicine. The academy is made up of a group of technicians from varied backgrounds working in Internal Medicine. Sub-specialties include small animal medicine, large animal medicine, cardiology, oncology, and neurology. Their mission statement is: “The AIMVT will promote the interest in and advance the skills of Veterinary Technicians within the disciplines of veterinary internal medicine by providing cutting edge continuing education, working with veterinarians to advocate superior patient care, client education and consumer protection. The AIMVT will further the recognition of credentialed specialty technicians as leaders in the profession of veterinary internal medicine nursing.” The academy was recognized in 2006.⁸ For more information visit the academy website at www.aimvt.com.



5) The Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians (AVBT)

The AVBT promotes excellence in the discipline of veterinary behavior medicine. The academy will advance the skills of veterinary technicians within the discipline of animal behavior and further their recognition as critical components of the veterinary behavior team in creating, maintaining, and strengthening the human-animal bond. Their mission statement is: “The Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians (AVBT) exists to promote excellence in the discipline of veterinary behavior medicine. The AVBT will provide a process by which veterinary technicians may become certified as a Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) in the field of behavior. The veterinary technician who becomes certified as a VTS (Behavior) will demonstrate superior knowledge in scientifically—and humanely—based techniques of behavior health, problem prevention, training, management, and behavior modification. The AVBT will advance the skills of veterinary technicians within the discipline of animal behavior and further their recognition as critical components of the veterinary behavior team in creating, maintaining, and strengthening the human-animal bond.” The academy was recognized in 2008.⁹ For more information visit the academy website at www.avbt.net.



6) The Academy of Equine Veterinary Nursing Technicians (AEVNT)

The AEVNT promotes excellence in the discipline of veterinary equine medicine. An equine tech demonstrates superior knowledge and expertise of equine veterinary nursing. Their mission statement is: “To Advance the education and professional recognition of credentialed equine veterinary technicians who display excellence in and dedication to providing superior nursing care to the equine patient.” The academy was recognized in 2009.¹⁰ For more information visit the academy website at www.aevnt.org.



7) The Academy of Veterinary Zoological Medicine Technicians (AVZMT)

The AVZMT was created specifically for veterinary technicians working in zoological medicine. They offer the opportunity for zoo technicians to demonstrate excellence in the field. Their mission statement is: “The Academy of Veterinary Zoological Medicine Technicians exists to promote excellence in the discipline of zoo medicine. The Academy will provide a process by which veterinary technicians may become certified as a Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) in the field of zoo medicine. The veterinary technician that becomes certified as a VTS will demonstrate superior knowledge—scientifically—and humanely-based techniques of zoological medicine.” The academy was recognized in 2009.¹¹ For more information visit the academy website at www.avzmt.org.



8) The Academy of Veterinary Surgical Technicians (AVST)

The AVST encourages experienced surgical technicians to enhance their education and training. The purpose of the academy is: “The purpose of the Academy of Veterinary Surgical Technicians (AVST) is to increase the competence of those who perform specialty duties in the field

of veterinary surgery. The academy will strive to ensure that the veterinary surgical technician possesses superior knowledge and skill in the care and management of surgical cases, surgical instruments, and the surgical suite. The AVST will offer candidates advanced continuing education opportunities and will establish educational and professional experience prerequisites to earn recognition as a VTS (Surgery).” The academy was recognized in 2010.¹² For more information visit the academy website at www.avst-vts.org.



9) The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Clinical Practice (AVTCP)

The AVTCP will advance veterinary technicians working within the disciplines of veterinary clinical practice. The academy’s credentialed veterinary technicians provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary care. Candidates are expected to demonstrate expertise in a range of clinical disciplines within their species specialty. The available subspecialties are exotic companion animal; small animal, canine/feline; small animal, feline; production medicine; production medicine, small ruminant; production medicine, bovine; production medicine, swine. Their mission statement is: “The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Clinical Practice advances the profession of veterinary technology through recognition and support of veterinary technicians and veterinary nurses who demonstrate the highest standards of practice in clinical healthcare.” The academy was recognized in 2010.¹³ For more information visit the academy website at www.avtcp.org.



10) The Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians (AVNT)

The AVNT was created to develop and support the area of veterinary nutrition, develop the knowledge and expertise of veterinary technicians to become certified in the field of nutrition and endorse technicians as a vital part of the veterinary nutrition profession. Their mission statement is: “The mission of the Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians (AVNT) is to advance the area of and promote excellence in the discipline of veterinary nutrition. The AVNT provides a process by which veterinary technicians may become certified as a Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) in the field of nutrition thereby increasing the competence of those practicing in the field of veterinary nutrition. The AVNT mission is to enhance the skills and knowledge of veterinary nutrition technicians and promote technicians as integral members of the veterinary nutrition team.” The academy was recognized in 2010.¹⁴ For more information visit the academy website at www.nutritiontechs.org.



11) The Academy of Veterinary Clinical Pathology Technicians (AVCPT)

The AVCPT was created to advance the area of and promote excellence in the discipline of veterinary clinical pathology. Their mission statement is: “The mission of AVCPT is to advance the area of

HEY, NAVTA!

What have you done for me lately?

NAVTA's mission is to **REPRESENT, ADVOCATE FOR, and HELP EDUCATE** credentialed veterinary technicians in the United States. Here are the **Top 10** ways we've upheld that mission in just the last 12 months.

- 1** Increased membership **from 6,500 to more than 8,500** in just over two years.
- 2** **Provided expert testimony and other legislative and regulatory support** in 22 states.
- 3** **Published an industry-wide recommendation** that only credentialed Veterinary Technicians (CVT, RVT, LVMT, or LVT) should qualify for "Veterinary Nurse" job postings.
- 4** **Defended the use of the title "Veterinary Technician"** for only those who have earned credentials (CVT, RVT, LVMT, or LVT).
- 5** **Created a strong and productive relationship with AVMA**, leading to regular dialogue and collaboration that benefits both organizations and our members.
- 6** **Collaborated with NAVC**, organizer of VMX, to assist with a public relations campaign that will increase pet owner awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Veterinary Technicians.
- 7** Provided **more than 20 hours of free, virtual, leading-edge continuing education**.
- 8** **Formed NAVTA's first-ever Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee**, with charges to enhance and enlighten NAVTA's efforts in all of those areas.
- 9** **Created a Government Relations Committee** to increase the effectiveness of our critical efforts in regulatory and legislative work.
- 10** Launched the "Tuition for Techs" scholarship program with BI, providing \$50,000 of tuition assistance to qualifying students in vet tech schools.



Don't miss out on what NAVTA can do for YOU.

Join or renew your membership today at navta.net/membership

and promote excellence in the discipline of veterinary clinical pathology. The veterinary technician specialist (VTS) will demonstrate superior knowledge and performance of clinical pathology techniques, which will promote improved client service and confidence as well as enhanced patient care. The AVCPT will further the recognition of credentialed specialty technicians as leaders in the profession of veterinary clinical pathology.” The academy was recognized in 2011.¹⁵ For more information visit the academy website at www.avcpt.net.



12) The Academy of Dermatology Veterinary Technicians (ADVT)

The purpose of ADVT is to promote excellence through specialization in the discipline of veterinary dermatology by demonstrating an advanced proficiency of dermatologic procedures, working with the veterinary team and client to advocate superior patient care, and providing cutting-edge continuing education. Their mission statement is: “The mission of the Academy of Dermatology Veterinary Technicians is to promote excellence through specialization in the discipline of veterinary dermatology by demonstrating an advanced proficiency of dermatologic procedures, working with the veterinary team and client to advocate superior patient care, and providing cutting-edge continuing education.” The academy was recognized in 2015.¹⁶ For more information visit the academy website at www.vetdermtech.org.



13) Academy of Veterinary Ophthalmic Technicians (AVOT)

The AVOT will advance veterinary technicians working within the disciplines included in veterinary ophthalmology and increase the competence of those who perform specialty duties. Their mission statement is: “The AVOT’s mission is to advocate ocular health while advancing the knowledge and practice standards in the field of ophthalmology. The Academy operates under the guidance of NAVTA and the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) to foster yearly continuing education, professional development, and networking with industry partners.” The academy was recognized in 2016.¹⁷ For more information visit the academy website at www.avot-vts.org.



14) The Academy of Laboratory Animal Veterinary Technicians and Nurses (ALAVTN)

ALAVTN members work in a veterinary research setting; they have advanced knowledge and skills in a variety of clinical disciplines and in a variety of species. The available subspecialties are research clinical nursing, with species categories of “traditional”, “nontraditional” and “large animal” species, research surgeon, research anesthetist. Their mission statement is: “To promote excellence by specialization in veterinary technology/nursing in the distinct field of Laboratory Animal Medicine by demonstrating advanced proficiency of skill level and knowledge base. To provide and encourage exceptional animal welfare and medical care for animals used in laboratory animal settings. To promote respect and treat all species of research animals with the utmost dignity.” The academy was recognized in 2016.¹⁸ For more information visit the academy website at www.alavtn.org.



15) The Academy of Physical Rehabilitation Veterinary Technicians (APRVT)

The APRVT will advance veterinary technicians working within the disciplines of veterinary physical rehabilitation. Their mission statement is: “The Academy is organized to advance the purpose of its affiliated central organization, The American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (ACVSMR). It is the mission of the Academy to provide assistance in veterinary physical rehabilitation, encouraging veterinary professionals and colleagues to further their education, while improving the quality of animals’ lives.” The academy was recognized in 2017.¹⁹ For more information visit the academy website at www.aprvt.com.

16) The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Diagnostic Imaging (AVTDI)




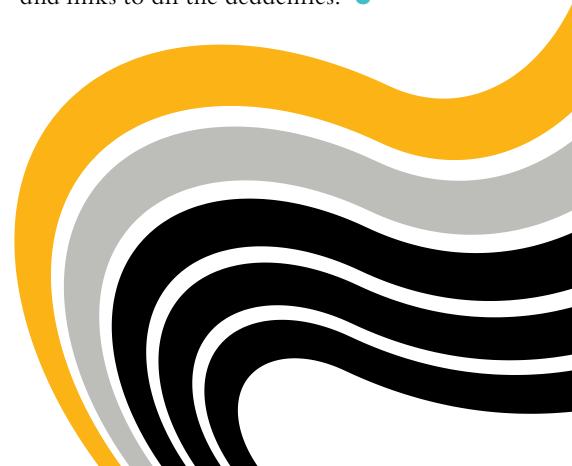
The AVTDI will advance veterinary technicians working within the disciplines of veterinary diagnostic imaging. Their mission statement is: “To advance the education and professional recognition of credentialed veterinary technicians who display excellence and dedication to providing superior diagnostic imaging quality to the veterinary patient.” The academy was recognized in 2018.²⁰ For more information visit the academy website at www.avtdi.org.

Summary

If you have always had a dream to become a specialist, pick what you are passionate about and go for it. There are many specialties to pick from and more to come. If you do not see one you are interested in, think about starting an academy with like-minded technicians. NAVTA and the CVTS can help start the journey to develop an academy. Becoming a veterinary technician specialist is hard work, but worth it. Make sure to

If you have always had a dream to become a specialist, pick what you are passionate about and go for it . . . Becoming a veterinary technician specialist is hard work, but worth it.

research the academy requirements and reach out to the academy to get your questions answered. They are here to help you as you go on the journey to become a veterinary technician specialist (VTS). Also check the NAVTA website for information and guidance at www.NAVTA.net. They have great resources and links to all the academies. 



VICKY OGRAIN, MBA, RVT, VTS (NUTRITION)

Vicky received her technician degree from Los Angeles Pierce College. She served in private practice for many years in California, and then 20 years ago began a career with Hill’s Pet Nutrition, where she is a Specialist, Global Education in the Global Professional Veterinary Affairs department, where she focuses on developing and educating on nutrition. She is credentialed in California and Kansas.

In 2007, she completed a Bachelor of Science and in 2008, she completed a Masters, both in Business Administration. Vicky obtained her Veterinary Technician Specialty (VTS) in nutrition in June 2013 and serves as secretary for the Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians. She is the secretary/ treasure of the Kansas Veterinary Technician Association and the technician track chair for the Pacific Veterinary Conference. She was the 2014 president of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA). Currently she serves as the NAVTA CE Committee chair and is a member of the NAVTA CVTS Committee.

Vicky speaks nationally and internationally and is a published author.



LET'S REVIEW...

- Veterinary technician specialties were developed by?**
 - AVMA Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities
 - National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America
 - The Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians and Nurses
 - Association of Veterinary Technician Educators
- Who is eligible to become a Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS)?**
 - Veterinarians
 - Veterinary assistants
 - Credentialed veterinary technicians
 - Office managers
- To start up an academy the organizing committee must be made up of whom?**
 - NAVTA members
 - AVMA member
 - AVTE members
 - AAHA members
- What is not required to submit an application to a VTS academy?**
 - Be a credentialed veterinary technician
 - Submit logs and reports
 - Complete continuing education
 - High school diploma
- About how many VTS are there, as of 2022?**
 - 500
 - 1,400
 - 5,000
 - 14,000



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UTILIZING A S.M.A.R.T. GOAL

COMBAT VETERINARY TEAM BURNOUT BY ACHIEVING DEFINED GOALS

Rebecca Rose, CVT

Survey Says! Achieving Goals Combats Burnout

“Those who had professional goals reported significantly less burnout and felt happier and more valued than those who did not,” states a recent survey conducted by Dr. Ivan with his team at Veterinary Integration Solutions and Galaxy Vet.¹

The whitepaper goes on to say, “Among other factors, the study sought to determine whether goal setting has a connection with burnout rate. The hypothesis for this was that veterinary professionals might be at higher risk for under-challenge burnout subtype because of their high-achieving nature. Monotony, boredom, underutilization of skills, and lack of learning opportunities are some of the common contributors to this type of burnout.”

If you know me, you understand I am SOLUTION ORIENTED! So, if we can determine (either by what your gut tells you – veterinary technicians have a strong sense of intuition—go with your gut – or by a survey) that lack of goal setting creates little career advancement and professional growth then the solution is establishing personal and professional goals, LET’S DO IT!



Establish Personal and/or Professional Goals

Veterinary team members may think to achieve a goal it has to be GRANDIOSE, over-the-top in measurement. NOT SO! Veterinary professionals are encouraged to

define a small, medium, and LARGE goal, celebrating each upon achievement.

Examples of Goals

Personal:

1. Read or listen to a self-help book to improve communication skills
2. Attend a local play



- Volunteer as a leader with the local 4-H group

Professional

- Deliver a 30-minute presentation to your veterinary team on improving and benefits of active listening skills
- Read or listen to *The Experience Economy, Work is a Theatre & Every Business a Stage*²
- Evaluate and update consultation/exam room handouts related to geriatric patient care

See how these goals could be defined as either personal or professional with varied degrees of impact with different levels of time and resource (\$) commitment?

What goals would you like to achieve? Write them here and share with your supervisor and family.

Personal Goals

- _____
- _____
- _____

Professional Goal

- _____
- _____
- _____

Yes, I've used a SMART Goal before

You may have used or heard of a SMART Goal, but you are challenged to use it EFFECTIVELY.

What I often experience when working with veterinary teams is that the worksheet is not used to its fullest potential by fully filling it out from top to bottom. Trust in the process.

That is precisely what we are going to do, walk through the process.

A goal without a plan is simply a wish.

Goals are best defined as a specific task or bite-size project. As an example, improving client communications is far too vague; a better, smaller goal, Understanding Empathy in Client Communications.

Another example: create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)—WOW! That's a monster! How about creating SOPs in properly disinfecting a patient cage? Or SOPs in laboratory procedures for diagnosing internal parasites? You get the gist—pare it down! Define for success then celebrate when completed.

A personal goal from the examples above—apply SMART Goal

- Specific**—Volunteer as a 4-H Leader in an entry level position committing to 2-year term
- Measurable**—Stepping outside of comfort zone to network with 4-H leaders, young adults, and build skills in leadership
- Actionable**—Become acquainted with mentoring and supporting the local 4-H leaders, attending monthly meetings, following up on action items with members and community
- Relevant**—Because of the awesome experience as a child, feels appropriate to give in this manner
- Timely**—Begin researching and connecting to determine the best focus for time and talents. Commit to two years, then re-evaluate.

CELEBRATE! When reaching the two-year mark, bake cupcakes for all the members and leaders!

A professional goal from the examples above—apply SMART Goal

- Specific**—Deliver 30-minute presentation to team on improving and benefits of active listening
- Measurable**—Desired end goal is for the

veterinary team to assess their active listening skills

- Actionable**—During upcoming team meeting (in three months, place on the agenda) be given “the floor” for 30-minute presentation with slide deck and projector
- Relevant**—Supports the hospital’s mission of listening to clients to meet the needs of the patient
- Timely**—Build the notes to accompany the presentation in 4 weeks. Build the slide deck by 8 weeks. Practice the presentation with manager in 9 weeks. Polish and deliver the class in 12 weeks. Place on the Team Meeting Agenda with a worksheet.

CELEBRATE! Yes, you read correctly, celebrate the professional accomplishment! Equally important in acknowledging the goal and bringing it to fruition is

Equally important in acknowledging the goal and bringing it to fruition is recognizing the hard work and dedication in completing.

recognizing the hard work and dedication in completing. Ice cream for EVERYONE immediately following the presentation!

Support Goal-Setting at Work

In the Blog *10 Ways to Support Your Team at Work*³, author Robert Chastney, suggests:

- Communicate regularly**, clearly articulating the goals and resources needed to achieve the goal
- Check-in regularly**, placing progress reports into the goal in a timely fashion
- Be inclusive**, and seek help from all

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within your network

4. **Learn to prioritise**, both the goal itself and the time management around it
5. **Empower others** by leading through example in goal-setting and achieving
6. **Work on emotional intelligence**, always a good goal to elevate self-awareness
7. **Set reasonable goals**, small, medium, and LARGE, quantifying the time and resources needed
8. **Take breaks** to evaluate obstacles, resources, and building blocks needed
9. **Focus on wellbeing**, because a veterinary professional can only give from a full tank or a full cup
10. **Promote growth**, yours and others on your team

Make your goal a REALITY!

Use the worksheet below to bring your goal to its fullest potential, COMPLETED! Share liberally with your team, managers and leaders.

Wishing you all the success and goals achieved in 2022 as you can conceivably complete! 🍀

REFERENCES

1. Burnout and Work-Life Balance Study in Veterinary Profession: November 2021, Veterinary Integration Solutions, Dr. Ivan Zak, November 2021, <https://vetintegrations.com/insights/burnout2021/>
2. The Experience Economy, Work is Theatre and Every Business is a Stage, Joseph Pine II and James H Gilmore, April 1999, <https://www.amazon.com/Experience-Economy-Theater-Every-Business/dp/0875848192>
3. Ten Ways to Support your Team at Work, Future Learn, Robert Chastney, October 2020, <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/ten-ways-support-your-team-at-work>,

SMART GOAL WORKSHEET

Specific (give it a concise title)

Measured (what is the current state and what is the desired end goal)

Accountable (who has oversight- 2 team members if within a team goal)

Actionable (what are the steps needed)

Relevant (how relevant is this to the overall mission or goals of the organization, is it supported with resources)

Timely (keep it on track with specific dates and check-ins)

Date started _____ Middle review (1) _____

Middle review (2) _____ Completed date _____

Celebrate Achievements (recognize milestones along the way and/or the final completion)

Other:



itching eased joy retrieved



Long-term support for their skin — and your treatment plan.

- 1** The only clinical nutrition for both food and environmental allergies (among leading therapeutic brands in North America)
- 2** Nutrition formulated to support the skin barrier against environmental irritants, year round

SCIENCE DID THAT.