

## **Veterinary Technician vs Veterinary Nurse** **CACVT and CVMA Adopt Positions for Terminology**

Printed in *Techniques*

CACVT's monthly publication distributed to all members

December 2001, page 1

The debate extends across the United States as to whether the title should be *veterinary technician* or *veterinary nurse*. Each state can decide, based on the language of practice acts, philosophical approaches, and organizational positions.

Currently the North American Veterinary Technician Association (NAVTA) supports the term veterinary technician in an attempt to standardize nomenclature. Patrick Navarre, the executive director of NAVTA, stated that NAVTA's energy is focused on technician utilization, raising salaries, and increasing public awareness. "NAVTA's goal is bigger than the term" stated Navarre.

The Colorado Association of Certified Veterinary Technicians (CACVT) and the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) have collectively endorsed usage of the term veterinary technician. In part, this is dictated by the Colorado Veterinary Practice Act, which specifically uses the term veterinary technician.

While Certified Veterinary Technicians (CVTs) do graduate from an AVMA-accredited program receiving a degree in veterinary technology, pass a national board exam, and maintain continuing education, we are not licensed by the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). Whether certified or not, veterinary technicians in Colorado must work under the direct, on-premises supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

The Colorado Nurse Practice Act is administered by DORA and the State Board of Nursing. Their statute governs the practice of professional and practical nursing in human medicine, and defines various terms, including LPN (licensed practical nurse) and RN (registered professional nurse).

Nursing roles do occupy a large portion of the veterinary technician's duties, thereby making it appealing to use nurse terminology when describing the role to the general public. Aside from potential confusion or concerns over the implication of licensure, the term *nurse* does not adequately describe a veterinary technician who works outside of the hospital setting, such as in education, not-for-profit organizations, or in food or pharmaceutical companies.

In many ways, the veterinary technician's role is broader than the nurse's role. For example, veterinary technicians (under supervision) can induce, intubate, and maintain anesthesia. Veterinary technicians must be skilled in an array of roles that are frequently performed by specialized nurses or technicians in human medicine (e.g., radiology technicians, surgical nurses, dental hygienists, and laboratory technicians).

Thus, the CACVT, in conjunction with the CVMA, will currently support the veterinary technician terminology and focus our energies on professionalism, public education, and communication.