



Veterinary Technology

NDSU

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

**North Dakota State University
Veterinary Technology Program**

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Report to Health Services Committee

By: Teresa Sonsthagen, BS, LVT and Stacey Ostby, BS, LVT Co-Directors of the NDSU Veterinary Technology and Dr. Neil Dyer, Professor/Director of NDSU-VDL.

Senator Judy Lee requested information, “regarding the veterinary technician program at North Dakota State University; services veterinary technicians are allowed to perform; existing regulations, standards and certifications including state and national requirements, and the processes to amend requirements; and whether veterinary technicians could play a larger role in meeting the veterinary needs of the state.

In 1995 the veterinary practice act was opened to include veterinary technicians. The following are those sections of the practice act that address the requested information.

1. Veterinary Technology Program at NDSU

- 4 year BS degree in Applied Science - this is not a 2+2 program. There are 24 BS degree programs in the U.S. most of which are 2 years “technical” and 2 years general education. We encourage minors in Animal Sciences, Microbiology, Bio-Technology or Business.
- Continuous AVMA accreditation since 1979 – our last site visit was October 2013, we will hear in May if our status remains fully accredited. I do not anticipate it to be otherwise.
- Up to 28 students are accepted each year – this number is based on availability of seats and space for animal housing in Robinson Hall. In 2013 we had 45 completed applications with 34 students qualified. This year we have 49 applications with 32 qualified students.
- First in U.S. to offer Minor in Large Animal Veterinary Technology – all students have to learn the required AVMA skills on the large animals. This course of study goes deeper into cattle and horse medical techniques, diseases and pharmaceuticals.
- Faculty = 1 full time/1 part time Veterinarians - 4 BS, LVTs
Staff = 1 AS, CVT that is our animal care taker and 1 Administrative Assistant

2. Services veterinary technicians are allowed to perform.

In 1995 the veterinary practice act was opened to include veterinary technicians. The following are those sections of the practice act that address the requested information.

43-29-12.1. Veterinary technician services - Emergency services - Prohibited services.

1. A veterinary technician may perform the following services under the direction, supervision, and control of a licensed veterinarian, provided the licensed veterinarian performs a daily physical examination of the animal being treated:

- a. Venipuncture, including insertion of an indwelling catheter when required.
- b. Catheterizing the urinary bladder.
- c. Injection, including hypodermic injection and parenteral fluids, except when in conflict with a government regulation.
- d. Immunization immediately after examination by a licensed veterinarian, except when in conflict with a government regulation.
- e. Inducing, maintaining, and monitoring anesthesia under the direct supervision of the licensed veterinarian.

- f. Exposing and developing radiographic film.
 - g. Collecting and administering whole blood or plasma to an animal.
 - h. Assisting in surgery as directed by the licensed veterinarian.
 - i. Taking electrocardiogram and electroencephalogram tracings.
 - j. Performing routine laboratory procedures, including hematology, serology, microbiology, cytology, chemistry, urinalysis, fecal analysis, and skin scrapings.
 - k. Administering colonic irrigations and wound dressings.
 - l. Operating ultrasonic and polishing instruments for dental prophylaxis.
 - m. Preparing animals for surgery, including clipping, scrubbing, and disinfecting an operative site.
 - n. Preparing medicants for dispensing to clients on the direct or written order of the licensed veterinarian.
 - o. Maintaining surgery, x-ray, and laboratory logs and pharmacy records.
2. Under emergency conditions, a veterinary technician may perform the following treatments:
- a. Applying tourniquets and pressure bandages to control hemorrhage.
 - b. Administering pharmacological agents and parenteral fluids only after direct communication with a licensed veterinarian, if the veterinarian is present or en route to the location of the distressed animal.
 - c. Performing resuscitative oxygen procedures.
 - d. Applying temporary splints or bandages to prevent further injury to bones or soft tissues.
 - e. Applying appropriate wound dressings and external supportive treatment in severe burn cases.
 - f. Providing external supportive treatment in heat prostration cases.
3. A veterinary technician may not perform the following services unless the veterinary technician is acting as a surgical assistant to a licensed veterinarian under this chapter:
- a. Making a diagnosis.
 - b. Prescribing a treatment.
 - c. Performing surgery.

Can this be interpreted as; if my veterinarian calls me a surgical assistant I can perform these three services? I may be wrong but I think this is interpreted by some veterinarians in this manner.

43-29-13. Practices excepted from chapter.

The following persons may not be considered to be engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine in this state:

- 8. Any veterinary technician or other employee of a licensed veterinarian performing duties under the direction and supervision of the veterinarian responsible for the technician's or other employee's performance.

This exception has also been interpreted many ways.

Many veterinarians in the state allow their veterinary technicians to perform cat neuters and declaws, remove loose teeth and suture cuts. This statement could be all that is needed to expand the role of veterinary technician in veterinary practices.

The only thing that trips this up are the words “or other employee” which to me indicates an individual without a veterinary technology degree. Which is a frightening thought, as a consumer I would not want an on-the-job-trained individual doing anything of a medical nature to my pets or livestock!

3. Existing regulations, standards and certifications

43-29-01.1. Definitions. ND Veterinary Practice Act

7. "Licensed veterinary technician" means a person who has graduated from an accredited program in veterinary technology or an equivalent program as determined by the board, and who has passed an examination prescribed by the board.

43-29-07.1. Veterinary technicians - Examinations.

2. An applicant for licensure as a veterinary technician must pass the veterinary technician national examination with a score approved by the board.

43-29-08.1. Veterinary technician - Renewal of license.

1. A license issued to a veterinary technician under this chapter expires on December thirty-first.
2. A veterinary technician shall submit renewal fees and current mailing address before December thirty-first on an application form provided and mailed to the license holder by the board.
3. A veterinary technician shall submit evidence of completion of required continuing education credits in the veterinary field during the calendar year in order to apply for a license renewal.
4. Failure to submit the appropriate license renewal fee every year results in forfeiture of all rights and privileges under this chapter and the veterinary technician may not perform veterinary technician services unless the veterinary technician pays a delinquency fee in addition to the license renewal fee.

This has been pared down from the NDBVME Rules to get to the main points.

This wording does not distinguish between an AS or BS degree graduates from Veterinary Technology programs. The AVMA describes AS degree graduates as veterinary technicians and BS graduates as veterinary technologists.

4. The processes to amend requirements.

43-29-09. Limited specialty license - Graduate veterinary technicians.

2. The board may adopt rules for the training, certification, and limits of activity for veterinary assistants and shall adopt rules for the licensing, training, certification, and limits of activity for veterinary technicians being trained and employed under the direct supervision and responsibility of a licensed veterinarian. All veterinary technicians must be registered with and subject to requirements established by the board.

Page 6 of the ND Veterinary Practice Act.

Note – I removed the wording that pertained to assistants on the slide – “may adopt rules for the training, certification, and limits of activity for veterinary assistants.

This seems to give the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners the ability to determine the scope of participation by veterinary technicians in a veterinary practice as per the veterinarian’s orders?

Or Does it?

Do the words “being trained and employed under” indicate that this is a person that has not graduated from an accredited veterinary technology program?

The words “direct supervision” is defined by the AVMA in their model practice act as: "Supervision":

"Direct supervision" means a licensed veterinarian is readily available on the premises where the patient is being treated. "Indirect supervision" means a licensed veterinarian need not be on the premises; has given either written or oral instructions for treatment of the patient; is readily available by telephone or other forms of immediate communication; and has assumed responsibility for the veterinary care given to the patient by a person working under his or her direction.

If the NDBVME Rules can be interpreted this way that is what we would recommend doing instead of opening the practice act. If it cannot be interpreted this way then all parties involved would have to determine if it is worth opening the practice act to add or change wording to include definitions of supervision and clarify the scope of veterinary technicians in practice.

5. Whether veterinary technicians could play a larger role in meeting the veterinary needs of the state.

In a word Yes! However conversations must be held with veterinarians, veterinary technicians and consumers to determine the scope of this role.

This topic has been discussed and movement towards veterinary technicians having more indirect supervision has occurred in a number of states. Alaska, Indiana and Texas have all recently placed wording in their practice acts to allow technicians to work remotely under a veterinarian's supervision or have expanded their roles in the practice. On Page 4 of the provided documents the areas highlighted are those sections in the practice acts that pertain to veterinary technicians.

Alaska Practice Act - 2013

12 AAC 68.300. VETERINARY TECHNICIAN SCOPE OF PRACTICE.

(a) A veterinary technician must be

- (1) licensed by the board;
- (2) the employee of a veterinarian licensed under AS 08.98; and
- (3) knowledgeable in
 - (A) the care and handling of animals;
 - (B) the basic principles of animal health; and
 - (C) routine laboratory and clinical procedures.

(b) The duties of a veterinary technician are limited to the performance of those services for which the veterinary technician is trained and which are compatible with the scope of AS 08.98. A veterinary technician may provide advanced animal care services, including the dispensing of medicine, only under the supervision and direction of a veterinarian licensed under AS 08.98.

(c) A veterinary technician licensed under AS 08.98 may not

- (1) prescribe medicine;
- (2) perform surgery; or
- (3) diagnose, prognose, or interpret diagnostic test results.

(d) In this section, "under the supervision and direction of a licensed veterinarian" means that the veterinary technician is employed by the supervising veterinarian to perform only those animal care duties delegated by, and within the routine practice of, the supervising veterinarian and that the supervising veterinarian

(1) accepts all responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of the care provided by the veterinary technician;

(2) personally examines the animals cared for by the veterinary technician to assure that the animal has received the proper care; however, a licensed veterinary technician may provide care to an animal

under the remote direction of the technician's employing veterinarian in communities that do not have an established veterinary practice;

(3) does all billing for the services provided by a veterinary technician.

Indiana – 2011 Practice Act

IC 25-38.1-4-2 Restrictions on veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants

Sec. 2. A:

(1) registered veterinary technician; or

(2) veterinary assistant;

may not diagnose, make a prognosis, prescribe medical or surgical treatment, or perform as a surgeon. However, the registered veterinary technician may perform routine procedures defined by board rules while under the direct or indirect supervision of a licensed veterinarian responsible for the technician's performance.

As added by P.L.2-2008, SEC.12. Amended by P.L.58-2008, SEC.38.

IC 25-38.1-4-3 Supervision of veterinary employees; compensation; duties

Sec. 3. (a) A supervising veterinarian shall determine and is responsible for determining the appropriate level of supervision, except where prohibited by law, if the tasks being delegated are commensurate with employee's training, experience, and skills.

(b) Registered veterinary technicians may, under direct or indirect supervision, perform routine food animal management practices if a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists.

(c) A registered veterinary technician or veterinary assistant may not receive a fee or compensation for veterinary services other than salary or compensation paid by the establishment where the individual is employed.

(d) In the performance of delegated veterinary tasks, a registered veterinary technician and veterinary assistant shall do the following:

(1) Accept only those delegated veterinary tasks for which there are mutually approved protocols, written standing orders, or verbal directions.

(2) Accept only those delegated veterinary tasks that:

(A) the registered veterinary technician or veterinary assistant is competent to perform based on education, training, or experience; and

(B) are not prohibited by law.

(3) Consult with the supervising veterinarian in cases where the registered veterinary technician or veterinary assistant knows or should have known that a delegated veterinary task may harm an animal.

As added by P.L.2-2008, SEC.12. Amended by P.L.58-2008, SEC.39.

Texas practice act - 2013

573.10 Supervision of Non-Licensed Persons. This amendment changes the title of the section and adds provisions regarding LVTs. The amendment provides that when determining the level of supervision and duties of non-veterinarians, veterinarians should consider whether the individual is licensed by the Board as well as the level of

training and experience of the non-veterinarian.; when feasible, a veterinarian should delegate greater responsibility to a LVT than to an unlicensed person.

573.11 Responsibility for Unlicensed Employees. This amendment adds that a LVT supervising an unlicensed employee of a veterinarian is responsible for any acts committed by the unlicensed employee of a veterinarian related to the practice of veterinary medicine. The amendment also states that when a LVT is acting under the supervision

of a veterinarian and violates a law, regulation, or board rule, both the veterinarian and the LVT are subject to discipline by the Board.

573.12 Responsibility for Licensure of Licensed Persons. This amendment adds LVTs to the responsibility of a veterinarian to ensure they are actively licensed by the board if the veterinarian employs or supervises them.

573.13 Delegation and Supervision Relating to Official Health Documents. This amendment allows a veterinarian to permit a nonlicensed employee under the immediate supervision of a LVT to collect samples from animals for official tests unless otherwise prohibited by law.

573.19 Dentistry. This amendment allows a LVT under the direct or immediate supervision of a veterinarian to extract loose teeth or dental fragments with minimal periodontal attachments by hand and without the use of an elevator in dogs or cats only.

Some things to ponder if everyone agrees upon implementing this expanded role. What level of education should the minimum? Currently the ND practice act does not distinguish between veterinary technicians and veterinary technologists. There is a huge gap in experience and in some cases knowledge between 2 and 4 year degree programs. Could a combination of any degree in veterinary technology with X number of years of work experience be enough? Should there be a distinction between a 2+2 graduate verses (2 years of tech school and 2 years of general education courses) verses a 4 year BS degree graduate? Could or should there be another layer of education on top of a BS degree?

There are many issues to think about!

We believe that a BS is the minimum educational requirement to qualify for an expanded role in veterinary medicine. NDSU could offer an online program to bring AS degrees up to BS degrees and then a Master's degree to veterinary technologists to expand their knowledge in (to be decided) and experience required to work with veterinarians to provide care to animals in remote parts of the state. Both could be a blend of online and traditional lecture/lab courses followed by or concurrent with an extensive internship in approved veterinary practices.

However this cannot happen without budget considerations. The sad fact that we are turning away qualified applicants because of space limitations must be addressed. Additional faculty, staff and an increase operating budget is also necessary to facilitate this program. With this support NDSU could make a substantial contribution to veterinary medicine in the state.

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
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Report to Health Services Committee,
April 24, 2014
Fargo City Commission Meeting Room

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Request for information:

1. Veterinary Technology Program at NDSU.
2. Services veterinary technicians are allowed to perform
3. Existing regulations, Standards and certifications
4. Processes to amend requirements
5. Could veterinary technicians play a larger role in meeting the veterinary needs of the state?

1. Veterinary Technology Program

- BS degree in Agriculture
- First in U.S. to offer Minor in Large Animal Veterinary Technology
- Continuous AVMA accreditation since 1979
- Up to 28 students are accepted each year
- 2 Veterinarians - 4 BS, LVTs - 1 AS, CVT - 1 Administrative Assistant

2. Services Veterinary Technicians are allowed to perform.

As per the practice act: 43-29-12.1.

1. Veterinary technician services – “provided the licensed veterinarian performs a daily physical examination”
2. Emergency services
3. Prohibited services – unless (key words)
 - a. Making a diagnosis.
 - b. Prescribing a treatment.
 - c. Performing surgery.

2. Services Veterinary Technicians are allowed to perform.

43-29-13. Practices excepted from chapter.

“The following persons may not be considered to be engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine in this state:

8. Any veterinary technician or other employee of a licensed veterinarian performing duties under the direction and supervision of the veterinarian responsible for the technician's or other employee's performance.”

3. Existing Regulations, Standards and Certifications

43-29-01.1. Definitions. 7. "Licensed veterinary technician" means a person who has graduated from an accredited program in veterinary technology or an equivalent program..."

Article 87-03 NDBVME Rules: Veterinary Technician Licensure:

- Requirements for licensure; recommendation from licensed veterinarian, graduation from an accredited program in veterinary technology and a passing score on the veterinary technician national examination.
- Continuing education requires eight hours, approved by the board, in the twenty-four months preceding each even-year renewal date.

4. Processes to amend requirements.

ND Veterinary Practice Act: 43-29-09.

Limited specialty license - Graduate veterinary technicians.

2. The board shall adopt rules [...] for the licensing, training, certification, and limits of activity for veterinary technicians being trained and employed under the direct supervision and responsibility of a licensed veterinarian. All veterinary technicians must be registered with and subject to requirements established by the board.

Or the practice act could be opened...

5. Could Veterinary Technicians play a larger role in meeting the veterinary needs of the state?

In a word Yes!

Conversations with veterinarians, veterinary technicians and consumers to determine scope of this role.

Alaska, Indiana and Texas have added this wording to their practice acts.

5. Could Veterinary Technicians play a larger role in meeting the veterinary needs of the state?

Is a BS degree enough?

NDSU – Veterinary Technology Program could be positioned to expand the knowledge and experience required.

Additional faculty and staff and budget