

The Veterinary Practice Team

Delegation of Tasks

What makes a veterinary practice a success? The Veterinary TEAM is the answer. This team is made up of individuals with different training, credentialing, backgrounds, personalities, qualities, and skills that all contribute to the success of the practice. Each member is a crucial part of the team and brings their special talents to the team.

One team member may be great with the clients and handles the reception area beautifully but doesn't have the desire to draw blood or restrain the angry cat in the treatment room. Another team member may be great helping scared cats to relax but not a good fit for the reception area. A truly great veterinary team is made up of these different individuals who develop a respect for one another.

The veterinary team involves all members of the staff. Roles and duties vary by practice and credentialing and are typically defined in an employee manual. The staff that works together as a team usually provides better patient care and client care. Employees like coming to work more than those who work as individuals. When a team environment is created, all roles involved in the veterinary health team are rewarded.

Veterinary Healthcare Team members can include the following:

- Students
- Groomers
- Kennel Assistants
- Veterinary Assistants
- Veterinary Technicians/Nurses
- Veterinary Technologists
- Veterinary Technician Specialists
- Receptionists
- Practice Managers
- Office Managers
- Veterinarians

The Veterinary Nurse Initiative

As you read through the sections below for the Veterinary Technician and Veterinary Technologist, the Veterinary Nurse Initiative (VNI) is an important thing to keep in mind. As explained below, at this time there is tremendous variation between states regarding licensing requirements and restricted position responsibilities. The VNI seeks to bring continuity across all states and strengthen the position of the technician. The goal is to both improve the quality of patient care and to improve the quality of the career itself.

Another focus is the concept that the pet owning public understands the term “nurse” due to the role of that position in human medicine. The term technician, many feel, is more equated with an automotive technician or a computer technician, for example, a person who works with machinery or equipment. Those who support the name change to Registered Veterinary Nurse believe the nomenclature change will help clients better understand who is involved in the care of their pets, similar to how the term “doctor” works across both human and veterinary medicine.

The VNI has been active for a few years now and the process is slow as each state’s practice acts and elected officials are a part of the process. And the use of the term nurse is not acceptable in the eyes of many technicians. You can learn more about the VNI on the NAVTA website [NAVTA's VNI Information](#).

Veterinary Technician (LVT, CVT, RVT)

In recent years, the profession of veterinary medicine has become ever more sophisticated and complex. The public expects state-of-the-art veterinary care for animals. To provide high quality service, today's veterinary team utilizes the skills of trained professionals known as **veterinary technicians**. As per the American Veterinary Medical Association, veterinary technicians perform valuable medical and non-medical services in clinical practice. The veterinary technician is educated and trained to support the veterinarian by assisting with surgery, laboratory procedures, radiography, anesthesiology, prescribed treatment and nursing, and client education.

A veterinary technician is a graduate of an AVMA accredited program in veterinary technology, usually leading to an associate or bachelor's degree. In addition, almost every state requires a veterinary technician to pass a credentialing exam to ensure a high level of competency. States may have different credentialing designations; RVT, CVT, LVT.

Some veterinary technicians pursue specialties in areas such as emergency and critical care, anesthesiology, internal medicine, animal behavior, or dentistry. Personal attributes that contribute to a successful career as a veterinary technician in clinical practice include a strong science background, an ability to work well with people and animals, and good communication and decision-making skills.

Duties and responsibilities

The veterinary technician is an integral member of the veterinary health care team. Veterinary technicians have been formally educated in the care and handling of animals, the basic principles of normal and abnormal life processes, and in many laboratory and clinical procedures. All veterinary technicians work under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. While a veterinary technician can assist in performing a wide variety of tasks, they cannot diagnose, prescribe, perform surgery, or engage in any activity prohibited by a state's veterinary practice act.

In private practice

A veterinary technician employed in a veterinary clinic or hospital handles many of the same responsibilities that nurses and other professionals perform for physicians. Some of the tasks they are training to do include:

- Obtain and record patient case histories
- Collect specimens and perform laboratory procedures
- Provide specialized nursing care
- Prepare animals, instruments, and equipment for surgery
- Handle anesthesia procedures
- Assist in diagnostic, medical, and surgical procedures
- Expose and develop radiographs (x-rays)
- Advise and educate animal owners
- Supervise and train practice personnel
- Perform dental prophylaxes

In biomedical research

In addition to the responsibilities above, veterinary technicians employed in a biomedical research facility perform other duties under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian, a biomedical research worker, or other scientist:

- Supervise the humane care and handling of research animals
- Assist in the implementation of research projects

Career opportunities

While the majority of veterinary technicians are employed in private practice, the demand for technicians is rapidly expanding to include new employment opportunities in human and animal health-related areas and specialties such as:

- biomedical research
- military service
- food safety inspection
- teaching
- zoo animal and wildlife care
- diagnostic laboratory support
- veterinary supply sales
- animal control and humane
- society animal care
- drug and feed company
- technical service and sales

Education

Students interested in a career in veterinary technology should have an aptitude for general science, math and biology and demonstrate basic language and communication skills. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accredits veterinary technology programs throughout the United States and Canada. Most AVMA-accredited programs lead to an Associate degree after two years but some lead to a four-year Baccalaureate degree. Technicians with Baccalaureate degrees usually receive higher salaries and greater level of job responsibilities and are known as **veterinary technologists**.

A period of clinical experience in a veterinary practice is required for all students in an AVMA-accredited veterinary technology program. This period of hands-on training is called a preceptorship, practicum, or externship and is a critical component of the veterinary technology program.

Distance learning

To accommodate work and family obligations, distance learning is an option for team members who wish to earn a degree in veterinary technology from home. The AVMA accredits several distance-learning courses that meet the same standards of accreditation as traditional programs and include a clinical component. Students fulfill the clinical training through sponsorship by a licensed veterinarian. Use this link for more information on [**AVMA accredited technology programs**](#).

Salary

Veterinary technicians earn salaries that compare favorably to those in other fields requiring a similar education. Salaries vary according to experience, responsibility, geographic location, and employment type.

Professional regulation

The majority of states have regulations that provide for technician credentialing (certification, licensure, or registration). Candidates are typically tested for competency through an examination regulated by the state board of veterinary medical examiners. Most states require candidates to pass the [**Veterinary Technician National Examination \(VTNE\)**](#) before being issued a license to practice.

Continuing education

Many state licensing boards require a certain number of hours of continuing education (CE) to renew professional licenses. In addition, with ongoing advances in technology and treatments, most veterinary technicians find it important to continue taking advantage of educational opportunities to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date.

Veterinary technician associations

Over 100 state, local, and provincial organizations of veterinary technicians exist across the United States. NAVTA, the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America, offers its members continuing education, as well as social and employment related activities to assist in their professional growth. More information regarding [**NAVTA**](#) may be found on their website.

Veterinary Technologists

A veterinary technologist is either graduate of a four year Bachelor of Science program in veterinary technology (accredited by the AVMA) or a graduate with an associate degree in veterinary technology (AVMA accredited), and a bachelor's degree in business, management, or health science. Technologists tend to hold higher positions, such as a lead or head technician, as well as an educator in a veterinary technician or assistant program.

Veterinary Technician Specialists (VTS)

In response 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 societies interested in attaining Academy status.

According to the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA), an Academy is a group of veterinary technicians who have received formal, specialized training, testing and certification in an area. The recognized academies include specialties in dental technology, anesthesia, internal medicine, emergency and critical care, behavior, zoological medicine, and equine veterinary nursing.

Although the training a veterinary technician receives in college makes them eligible for a variety of jobs in many areas, some graduate veterinary technicians choose to specialize and focus on a specific area of care. A VTS is a veterinary technician who has attained a higher level of knowledge and a skill in a particular field. Each academy sets forth its own criteria for the certification which can include formal course work, training within the practice, and completion of certain tasks. Status is not guaranteed; the work of the applicant must be approved by a board.

The NAVTA Committee on Veterinary Technicians Specialties (CVTS) was formed in 1994 and is recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association. CVTS provides guidelines to veterinary technician organizations to facilitate the formation of a specialty organization. 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.

Visit the [**NAVTA Specialties**](#) page for a list of veterinary technician Academies.

What's the difference between a Society and an Academy?

NAVTA defines a Society as a group of veterinary technicians who represent a distinct and identifiable specialty, supported by a veterinary specialty. Members may or may not have received formal training and may or may not be certified in that specialty. Members of a Society may go on to become members of an Academy if they meet the requirements of the Academy. NAVTA currently recognizes veterinary technician societies specializing in such fields as behavior, equine veterinary technology, zoo veterinary technology, and emergency and critical care.

A Society is for individuals interested in a specific discipline of veterinary medicine that must represent a distinct and identifiable specialty, supported by an existing veterinary specialty.

An Academy designates Veterinary Technicians receiving recognition as a specialty and is restricted to credentialed veterinary technicians, who must complete a formal process of education, training, experience and testing to qualify.

Veterinary Assistant (VA)

The Veterinary Assistant is another vital member of the practice team. The VA is an individual who has training on the job or through a high school or vocational school program. More formal training programs for veterinary assistants can be found through community colleges, vocational high schools, through distance education, and on the Internet. Some accredited veterinary technician programs also have courses designed just for Veterinary Assistants.

The Veterinary Assistant works under the direct supervision of the veterinarian or veterinary technician. Training of the VA involves performing tasks that do not require extensive knowledge of anatomy and physiology. Most veterinary assistants work in veterinary practices and are responsible for assisting the veterinary technician and/or the veterinarian in the performance of advanced technical procedures. Currently, Veterinary Assistants are not required to be licensed. Their role is not clearly defined in most states.

Effective Spring of 2011, NAVTA initiated the Approved Veterinary Assistant (AVA) designation. For more information please visit the [NAVTA AVA Page](#). Only graduates from a NAVTA approved VA program are eligible to take the AVA examination. The VetMedTeam VA Program has been NAVTA approved since inception.

Veterinary Assistants are involved with restraining animals for examinations, radiographs, injections, or other technical procedures. The VA must be able to modify the restraint technique for each technical procedure. A basic knowledge of animal behavior is required so the assistant can recognize any signs of aggression in the patients.

VA's are often involved in helping to maintain equipment and supplies. Hair clippers used in preparing animals for surgery, grooming supplies, and laboratory equipment must be kept clean and in good repair. The VA may be responsible for cleaning and sterilizing instruments used for surgery. Veterinary technicians involved in taking radiographs often require the aid of a veterinary assistant. The assistant will be responsible for helping to position the animal on the x-ray table.

Many Veterinary Assistants are involved in maintaining the pharmacy area of the hospital. This is where the medications are stored before they are used or dispensed to the client. Prescriptions dispensed to the client for their pet may be counted or measured by the veterinary assistant. The assistant is also responsible for packaging and labeling the prescription. All work in pharmacy should be verified by at least one other team member to avoid dispensing mistakes.

Some Veterinary Assistants work at the front desk and reception area of the practice. When working in the reception area, the VA will be answering telephones, scheduling appointments, handling correspondence, and preparing laboratory samples for testing. The Veterinary Assistant must be able to recognize emergencies and be prepared to answer questions from prospective clients. Good communication skills are especially important when working the reception area.

Practice Defined Job Titles

Although this is changing, many practices erroneously call their veterinary assistants by the title of technician. As explained in the section regarding veterinary technicians, formal education, through an AVMA accredited veterinary technology program, is the entry level for veterinary technicians. The correct use of the title of veterinary assistant or veterinary technician in no way reflects the importance of either role to the veterinary health care team.

Veterinary assistant responsibilities differ from that of veterinary technicians. The duties of veterinary technicians are those that require more formal and in-depth education than those of the veterinary assistant. However, it is vital that the veterinary assistant participates in available training classes and continues to improve skills and knowledge. The veterinarian and veterinary technician would not be able to deliver quality medical care without skilled veterinary assistants.

Kennel Assistant

Kennel assistants serve a vital function for animal care at a veterinary hospital. Although most acquire their training on the job, there are new avenues to become better trained and qualified aides. The American Boarding Kennel Association offers programs to help train kennel aides. A kennel aide is needed to assist in many areas of the hospital. This includes keeping the kennel area cleaned, well stocked and rotating and storing the supplies. A kennel aide learns basic animal handling and restraining. A more vital role of a kennel aide may be to observe hospital patients which may include watching for and informing the others of problems. Finally a kennel aide's basic knowledge of animal behavior lets them interact well with all the different varieties of patients and their owners.

Veterinary Receptionist

The receptionist is usually the first person clients interact with at the practice; the “face” of the practice. The first impression that the client receives through interacting with the front desk staff often has the greatest effect on the client's overall impression of the practice. One of the goals of the veterinary receptionist is to make clients feel welcome. The veterinary receptionist must be a friendly and cheerful person. Good organizational skills are also essential to handle the wide variety of tasks that the receptionist performs.

In some practices, a veterinary assistant may also perform the duties of the veterinary receptionist. There are some specific training programs available for veterinary receptionists, or they may be trained on the job. The duties of the veterinary receptionist include answering the telephone, scheduling appointments, greeting clients, filing patient records, and collecting and recording payments.

Veterinary Practice Manager and Certified Veterinary Practice Manager (CVPM)

In today's changing business environment, it is critical that veterinary hospitals have a designated Practice Manager. Regardless of practice size, good Practice Managers are worth their weight in gold. It has been discussed in many business periodicals and articles that in order for practices to be effective and efficient a quality, trained individual be placed in this position. Managers are charged with the success of the practice through quality patient care and exceptional client service. This is accomplished through proper management and training of the support team. A career in management in the field of veterinary medicine is challenging yet rewarding.

There are typically 3 different levels of managers that oversee a practice. The titles relate to size of practice, educational level of the manager, job duties and salary. The 3 titles are Office Manager, Practice Manager and Hospital Administrator. While there are general roles these individuals fill, the responsibilities can vary substantially between practices.

Levels of Management

Office Manager – This individual makes sure the office runs smooth. They may be responsible for scheduling, training and hiring of the reception staff or entire staff in smaller operations. This manager ensures clients are satisfied and manages the daily receipts as well as bookkeeping.

Practice Manager –The Practice Manager is responsible for the many different aspects of practice management including human resources, marketing, law and ethics, finance as well as organization of the practice. The successful practice manager is able to balance many different elements of management as well as be resourceful, excellent with time management, able to mediate conflicts with clients as well as support team members, be detail oriented, have initiative and have an excellent sense of customer service. The practice manager may or may not have authority over veterinarians within the practice.

Hospital Administrator – typically found in larger hospitals with many doctors as well as practices with multiple locations. This individual works in conjunction with practice owners and/or board of directors. This position coordinates and has final authority for all aspects of the practice. Hospital Administrators have all of the responsibilities of office and practice managers as well as authority over associate veterinarians. This individual is ultimately responsible for the financial success of the practice and may work with accountants, attorneys and consultants to ensure practice success.

Education

Individual practices will require varying levels of education. However, on average office managers may have a high school diploma and an associate's degree (2-year degree), while practice managers may have a 2 or 4 year degree in business, animal science, accounting, marketing or other related program. Hospital Administrators typically have a 4 year bachelor's degree at a minimum as well as a graduate degree such as an MBA (master's in business administration).

Regardless of the title, many individuals seek the designation of Certified Veterinary Practice Manager (CVPM). This prestigious designation, that few hold, represents a strong level of commitment to the veterinary profession and veterinary practice management. In order to receive this designation, an individual must sit for and pass an examination. However to sit for the examination, an individual must meet the following criteria:

- Active employment as a practice manager for a minimum of three (3) years within the last seven
- Eighteen (18) college semester hours in management related courses
- Forty-eight (48) hours of continuing education courses, seminars, etc., specifically devoted to management
- Four (4) letters of recommendation

The CVPM examination is administered through the CVPM Certification Board and the Veterinary Hospital Managers Association (VHMA). At present, the examination is administered three (3) times per year at VHMA meetings. For more information please visit the VHMA's [CVPM](#) area.

Veterinarian

As outlined by the AVMA, today's veterinarians are the only doctors educated to protect the health of both animals and people. They work hard to address the health needs of every species of animal, and they also play a critical role in environmental protection, food safety, animal welfare, and public health. Consumer surveys consistently rank veterinarians among the most respected professionals in America. Employment opportunities for veterinarians include such diverse areas as clinical practice, teaching and research, regulatory medicine, public health, and military service.

The Veterinarian is solely responsible for diagnosing, prognosing (evaluating probable outcome), prescribing medication, and performing surgery. They are ultimately responsible for all patient care and outcomes. Most veterinarians apply for veterinary medical school admission while obtaining a bachelor's degree in a compatible field. If accepted into a medical school the course of study usually takes another four years, making that a grand total of eight years of schooling. Every state requires a veterinarian to take and pass a licensing exam. Some veterinarians choose to become board certified in one or more components of healthcare.

Private or corporate clinical practice

In the United States, approximately two-thirds of veterinarians work in private or corporate clinical practice. Many treat only traditional or exotic pets such as dogs, cats, birds, small mammals (e.g., hamsters, guinea pigs), reptiles, and fish. Some veterinarians exclusively treat horses while others treat a combination of species. Still other veterinarians limit their practice to the care of farm/ranch animals and guide owners on production medicine and protecting our nation's food supply from farm to fork.

Teaching and research

Some veterinarians instruct veterinary students, other medical professionals, and scientists. Veterinary college/school faculty members conduct research, teach, provide care for animals in the veterinary teaching hospital, and develop continuing education programs to help practicing veterinarians acquire new knowledge and skills.

Research veterinarians employed at universities, colleges, governmental agencies, or in industry are finding new ways to diagnose, treat, and prevent animal and human health disorders. These veterinarians have made many important contributions to human health. For example, veterinarians made discoveries that helped control malaria and yellow fever, solved the mystery of botulism, produced an anticoagulant used to treat some people with heart disease, and identified the cause of West Nile virus infection. They also developed and refined techniques such as permanent artificial limbs and new treatments for joint disease and broken bones.

Veterinarians in pharmaceutical and biomedical research firms develop, test, and supervise the production of drugs and biological products such as antibiotics and vaccines for human and animal use. In addition to a veterinary degree, these veterinarians usually have specialized education in fields such as pharmacology, toxicology, virology, bacteriology, laboratory animal medicine, or pathology.

Veterinarians also work in management, regulatory affairs, technical sales and services, agribusinesses, pet food companies, and pharmaceutical companies. They are in demand in the agricultural chemical industry, private testing laboratories, and the feed, livestock, and poultry industries.

Regulatory medicine

To prevent the introduction of foreign diseases into the United States, veterinarians are employed by state and federal regulatory agencies to quarantine and inspect animals brought into the country. They supervise interstate shipments of animals, test for diseases, and manage campaigns to prevent and eradicate diseases, such as tuberculosis and rabies, which pose threats to animal and human health.

Veterinarians at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service USDA-FSIS) or a state department of agriculture ensure that only healthy animals enter our food supply. They see that our meat, poultry and egg products are safe for consumption through carefully monitored inspection programs.

Veterinarians in the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) monitor the development and testing of new vaccines for safety and effectiveness. USDA-APHIS veterinarians are also responsible for enforcing humane laws for the treatment of animals, protecting the health of our nation's agriculture through disease surveillance, and preventing foreign animal diseases from entering the country and endangering the nation's food supply. Other branches of the USDA, such as the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), employ veterinarians in research, research administration, and animal care.

Public health

Veterinarians serve as epidemiologists in city, county, state, and federal agencies investigating animal and human disease outbreaks such as food-borne illnesses, influenza, rabies, and West Nile viral encephalitis. They help ensure the safety of food processing plants, restaurants, and water supplies. Many serve in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

Veterinarians working in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study the effects of pesticides, industrial pollutants, and other contaminants on animals and people. At the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), veterinarians evaluate the safety and efficacy of medicines, medical products, pet foods and food additives. Veterinarians also work at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and its National Library of Medicine.

More than 100 veterinarians are employed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to protect public health by investigating zoonotic diseases and other diseases affecting the health of animals and people. CDC veterinarians are involved in investigating disease outbreaks throughout the world and developing programs to prevent the spread of diseases such as malaria, Ebola and avian influenza.

Veterinarians in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also protect the health and safety of animals and people through their work in developing disease surveillance and antiterrorism procedures and protocols.

Manmade and natural disasters pose significant risks to animals and humans, and veterinarians play vital roles in helping communities recover from disasters.

Military service

Veterinarians in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps are protecting the United States against bioterrorism. They are responsible for food safety, veterinary care of government-owned animals, and biomedical research and development. Officers with special education in laboratory animal medicine, pathology, microbiology, or related disciplines conduct research in military and other governmental agencies.

In the U.S. Air Force, veterinarians serve in the Biomedical Science Corps as public health officers. They manage occupational illness, food borne disease, and communicable disease control programs at Air Force bases around the world. These veterinarians promote public health through surveillance of disease trends, food safety practices, and facility sanitation.

Military veterinarians play a vital role rebuilding and improving animal care systems in underdeveloped and war-damaged countries. Many societies are heavily dependent upon animal agriculture, and improving the health of their animals improves the quality of life for the human community.

Other professional activities

Veterinarians are also employed in animal welfare, zoologic medicine, aquatic animal medicine, aerospace medicine (shuttle astronauts), animal shelter medicine, sports medicine, animal assisted activity and therapy programs, and wildlife medicine. There are veterinarians involved in local, state and federal governments, working with legislators to shape laws that protect the health, welfare and well-being of animals and people.

The road to becoming a veterinarian

Students should perform well in general science and biology in junior high school and pursue a strong science, mathematics, and biology program in high school to prepare for pre-veterinary coursework at a college or university. Before applying to veterinary college/school, students must successfully complete university level undergraduate prerequisites. Each college or school of veterinary medicine establishes its own pre-veterinary requirements, but typically these include demonstrating basic language and communication skills, and completion of courses in the social sciences, humanities, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics.

Admission to veterinary school is highly competitive, with the number of qualified applicants admitted varying from year to year. Applicants may be required to take a standardized test (for example, the Graduate Record Examination or GRE).

There are presently 28 AVMA Council on Education accredited colleges/schools of veterinary medicine in the United States, five in Canada, and nine in other countries. Each school is regularly evaluated by the Council on Education and must maintain the quality of its program to remain accredited.

Most veterinary schools require applications through the Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS). For information about application requirements, applicant data statistics, and other admissions resources, visit [VMCAS](#).

After completing the required veterinary medical curriculum (usually over four years), many graduates choose to pursue additional education in one of 20 AVMA-recognized veterinary specialties such as surgery, internal medicine, animal behavior, dentistry, ophthalmology, pathology or preventive medicine.

The future

The number of animals kept as pets continues to grow, providing a consistent need for quality veterinary care. The benefits of using scientific methods to breed, raise and manage livestock, poultry and fish, together with growing awareness of public health, animal welfare and disease control programs, will continue to demand the expertise of veterinarians.

Today's veterinarians are extremely dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of animals and humans. Veterinarians are animal lovers and understand the value of animals in our families and society. Other personal attributes that contribute to a successful career in veterinary medicine are:

- A scientific mind - A student interested in veterinary medicine should have an inquiring mind and keen powers of observation. Aptitude and interest in the biological sciences are important.
- Good communication skills - Veterinarians must meet, talk, and work well with a variety of people. Compassion is an essential attribute for success, especially for veterinarians working with owners who form strong bonds with their animals.
- Leadership experience - Many environments (e.g., clinical practice, governmental agencies, and public health programs) require that veterinarians manage employees and businesses. Having basic managerial and leadership skills contribute to greater success in these work environments.

Students

Students may be present completing an internship/externship as a requirement to graduate from a vet tech or assistant program. They may hold a paid position or be there as an observer. Some high schools allow students to work outside of the school and earn grades for on the job site employment. Also, many vet school have in-clinic prerequisites that must be completed.

The Practice Team

By now it should be evident that the practice team consists of a number of different roles, job titles, degrees of formal education, and credentialing. What may not be as apparent is that every role in the practice team is of vital important to the success of the practice and to the quality of the medical care provided to patients. While veterinarians have the highest degree of formal training and perform tasks no one else in the team is qualified to handle, the veterinarian could not provide care without his or her team providing support.

Veterinarians need credentialed veterinary technicians to provide support in areas such as anesthesia, surgery, diagnostic lab work, patient nursing, emergency care, medical recordkeeping, and client education. The veterinary assistant provides further support though restraint, assisting in acquiring and running diagnostic tests, nursing and surgical assistance, preparation for procedures, and a myriad of other duties.

The veterinary practice team is the greatest asset the practice has. Each person matters, regardless of title or role. It is through the recognition and understanding of each position in the team, as well as respect and admiration for the part each position plays in the delivery of medical care, that the team can begin to make a difference in the lives of their patients and in lives each other.

References:

Much of the material has been provided though information available at www.avma.org, www.navta.net and www.vhma.org and we thank them for sharing this information. We strongly recommend that you visit these websites to learn more about these associations.