NAVTA Survey and Report Confirm:

Title Protection for "Veterinary Technician" Is Needed and Desired, But Absent and Misunderstood in Most States

NAVTA

National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America

VNI Veterinary Nurse Initiative

This report was prepared by NAVTA's Veterinary Nurse Initiative (VNI) Working Group. The VNI Working Group works with state veterinary technician associations and others interested in pursuing the VNI goals. For information about the VNI, please visit **www.veterinarynurse.org**

About VNI

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Promoting a standard credential with educational standards in the US

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Establishing professional identity through public education and title recognition to contribute to public safety/protection.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

Clarifying the value, scope of practice, and title, delineating the credentialed veterinary technician/nurse role.

EXPANDING CAREER POTENTIALS

Defining the role of our profession in all areas of practice to maximize potentials.

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Introduction

The veterinary technician profession has long been challenged by a lack of cohesion and standards in the United States. As a result, the title of "Veterinary Technician" is used inconsistently and, often times, incorrectly, and suffers from a lack of clarity and understanding, both within the veterinary world and among consumers.

For example, a consumer may not know the specific differences between licensing requirements for registered nurses, physician assistants, or nurse practitioners, but consumers have an underlying understanding that there is a standard of professional education that individuals with these titles hold. This same consumer understanding needs to exist for the veterinary profession, where Veterinary Technicians are clearly differentiated from Veterinary Assistants and other paraprofessionals on the veterinary team.

To understand the current environment of the varying licensing requirements and standards throughout the United States, the NAVTA Veterinary Nurse Initiative Task Force reviewed the current veterinary practice act language for each state on title protection for veterinary technicians. In addition, a survey of current veterinary technicians was conducted to learn about the profession's feelings and experiences surrounding title protection for veterinary technicians. This report contains the findings of the Task Force's work, as well as the results from the survey, and recommendations on further steps to take to better promote title protection and standards for the veterinary technician profession.

To understand the current environment of the varying licensing requirements and standards throughout the United States, the NAVTA Veterinary Nurse Initiative Task Force reviewed the current veterinary practice act language for each state on title protection for veterinary technicians.

TABLE 1. Recognized veterinary technician credentials in the United States

Certified Veterinary Technician (CVT)	Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT)	Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT)	Licensed Veterinary Medical Technician (LVMT)
Arizona	California	Alabama	Tennessee
Arkansas	Georgia	Alaska	
Colorado	Hawaii	Delaware	
Connecticut	Indiana	Kentucky	
Florida	Iowa	Maine	
Idaho	Kansas	Michigan	
Illinois	Louisiana	Nebraska	
Massachusetts	Maryland	Nevada	
Minnesota	Missouri	New York	
Mississippi	New Mexico	North Dakota	
Montana	North Carolina	South Carolina	
New Hampshire	Ohio	Texas	
New Jersey	Oklahoma	Virginia	
Oregon	South Dakota	Washington	
Pennsylvania	West Virginia		
Rhode Island			
Utah			
Vermont			
Wisconsin			
Wyoming			

Current Licensing and Educational Requirements for Veterinary Technicians

Current standards for obtaining a veterinary technician credential in the United States involves two steps:

1. Obtaining an associate or bachelor degree in veterinary technology or nursing from an institution accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activity (CVTEA) , and
2. Passing the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE).

Recognized veterinary technician credentials in the United States include:

- Certified Veterinary Technician (CVT)
- Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT)
- Licensed Veterinary Medical Technician (LVMT)
- Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT)

Use of these credentials in each state is detailed in *Table 1*. Those who have not obtained a Veterinary Technician credential are considered Veterinary Assistants in most states.

TABLE 2. Title Definition in State Practice Acts

No Title Definition	Limited Title Definition	General Title Definition
The practice act does not provide a definition for veterinary technicians.	The practice act defines specific titles for veterinary technicians, such as "Certified Veterinary Technician," "Licensed Veterinary Technician," or "Registered Veterinary Technician."	The practice act defines the general term "Veterinary Technician" as those that are credentialed within the specified state.
13 U.S. states and jurisdictions do not define what a veterinary technician is within the veterinary practice: Colorado (CVT)*, Connecticut (CVT), Florida (CVT), Hawaii (RVT)**, Massachusetts (CVT), Minnesota (CVT), Montana (CVT)***, New Hampshire (CVT), New Jersey (CVT), Puerto Rico, Rhode Island (CVT), Vermont (CVT), Wyoming (CVT).	**15 U.S. states and jurisdictions have limited title definition:** Arizona (CVT), Illinois (CVT), Indiana (RVT), Kansas (RVT), Louisiana (RVT), Maine (LVT), Maryland (RVT), Missouri (RVT), Nebraska (LVT), Ohio (RVT), Pennsylvania (CVT), South Carolina (LVT), Tennessee (LVMT)****, Texas (LVT), West Virginia (RVT).	**24 U.S. states and jurisdictions provide general title definitions:** Alabama (LVT), Alaska (LVT), Arkansas (CVT), California (RVT), District of Columbia, Delaware (LVT), Georgia (RVT), Idaho (CVT), Iowa (RVT), Kentucky (LVT), Michigan (LVT), Mississippi (CVT), Nevada (LVT), New Mexico (RVT), New York (LVT), North Carolina (RVT), North Dakota (LVT), Oklahoma (RVT), Oregon (CVT), South Dakota (RVT), Utah (CVT), Virginia (LVT), Washington (LVT), Wisconsin (CVT).

** The state of Colorado is currently undergoing a sunrise review process to establish state governed credentialing*

*** The state of Hawaii Veterinary Technology Practice Act does not define "Veterinary Technician" in their definition section. Instead, it specifies title protection in the practice and qualification section ([§472-2]).*

**** The state of Montana currently issues private certification but has passed legislation to establish Licensed Veterinary Technicians to be implemented starting 2023.*

***** The state of Tennessee defines "Licensed Veterinary Technician" in the definition section of the practice act, but further specifies the title "Veterinary Medical Technician" in rules (Chapter 1730-03).*

TABLE 3. Title Protection in State Practice Act

No Title Protection	Limited Title Protection	General Title Protection
The practice act does not include language restricting the use of titles related to "veterinary technician" to those that are credentialed within the specified state.	The practice act protects the specific title of "Certified Veterinary Technician", "Licensed Veterinary Technician", or "Registered Veterinary Technician", restricting its use to those that are credentialed within the specified state. The use of the title "veterinary technician" is not restricted.	The practice act protects the general title "veterinary technician" restricting its use to those that are credentialed within the specified state.
12 U.S. states and jurisdictions have no protection as the title is not defined in the practice act and thus unregulated by the state: Colorado (CVT)*, Connecticut (CVT), Florida (CVT), Massachusetts (CVT), Minnesota (CVT), Montana (CVT)**, New Hampshire (CVT), New Jersey (CVT), Puerto Rico, Rhode Island (CVT), Vermont (CVT), Wyoming (CVT). **19 U.S. states and jurisdictions regulate veterinary technicians but have no title protection stated in the practice act:** Alaska (LVT), Arizona (CVT), District of Columbia, Idaho (CVT), Iowa (RVT), Kansas (RVT), Kentucky (RVT), Maine (RVT), Mississippi (CVT), New Mexico (RVT), North Carolina (RVT), North Dakota (LVT), Ohio (RVT), Oregon (CVT), South Carolina (LVT), South Dakota (RVT), Virginia (LVT), Washington (LVT), Wisconsin (CVT)	**10 U.S. states and jurisdictions are classified as having limited title protection in their practice act:** Illinois (CVT)***, Louisiana (RVT)***, Maryland (RVT), Michigan (LVT), Missouri (RVT)***, Nebraska (LVT), Pennsylvania (CVT)***, Texas (LVT)***, Utah (CVT), West Virginia (RVT)***	**11 U.S. states have general title protection in their practice act:** Alabama (LVT), Arkansas (CVT)****, California (RVT)***, Delaware (LVT), Georgia (RVT), Hawaii (RVT)***, Indiana (RVT)***, Nevada (LVT), New York (LVT), Oklahoma (RVT)***, Tennessee (LVMT)****

** The state of Colorado is currently undergoing a sunrise review process to establish state governed credentialing.*

*** The state of Montana currently issues private certification but has passed legislation to establish Licensed Veterinary Technicians to be implemented in 2023.*

**** These states also restrict the use of credential abbreviations (i.e. "CVT", "LVT", "RVT", or "VT") to those who are credentialed by the state.*

***** The states of Arkansas and Tennessee protect the term "technician" in addition to "veterinary technician" to be restricted to credentialed veterinary technicians.*

TABLE 4. Penalty Procedures for Title Misuse in State Practice Acts

No Penalty	Penalty
The practice act does not specify any penalty associated with non-compliance with title protection laws.	The practice act has written language specifying a penalty associated with non-compliance to title protection laws.
47 U.S. states and jurisdictions have no penalties for non-compliance with title protection laws.	**5 U.S. states issue penalties to individuals misrepresenting themselves as a veterinary technician:** Delaware (LVT): Fine Illinois (CVT): Class A misdemeanor Indiana (RVT): Class A misdemeanor Oklahoma (RVT): Fine and/or imprisonment Tennessee (LVMT): Class B misdemeanor

Current State of Title Protection in State Practice Acts

The NAVTA Veterinary Nurse Initiative Task Force reviewed the veterinary practice act language from every state in the United States as of November 2021. (The term "practice act" in the context of this report includes both legislative acts and regulations issued by a regulatory agency such as a state board of veterinary medicine.). The purpose of this work was to determine the existence and extent of language defining and protecting the term "Veterinary Technician." The results of this work are summarized in the *Tables 2-4*.

Acknowledgment is given to the AVMA State Advocacy Division for reviewing the Task Force's work and ensuring consistency in our interpretation.

Readers should note that this type of information can change frequently and are advised to check their jurisdiction's latest statutes and rules for any changes.

For the purpose of this report, there are three categories developed to provide clarity to the current state laws for title definition, title protection, and penalty for misuse for each U.S. state.

CATEGORY 1—Title Definition in State Practice Acts

There are 13 states and jurisdictions with no definition of "Veterinary Technician" in their practice acts, while 15 have limited definitions, and 24 have general definitions (*Table 2*).

CATEGORY 2—Title Protection in State Practice Act

There are a total of 31 states and jurisdictions that have no level of title protection for veterinary technicians, while 10 have limited protection, and 11 have general protection (*Table 3*).

CATEGORY 3—Penalty Procedures for Title Misuse in State Practice Acts

There are 5 states that have penalties specified for individuals misrepresenting themselves as Veterinary Technicians (*Table 4*).

NAVTA VNI Title Protection Survey Results

The NAVTA Veterinary Nurse Initiative (VNI) Task Force distributed the Title Protection Survey between March 6, 2020 and May 6, 2020. The purpose of the survey was to:

1. **Analyze the current state of title protection**
2. **To create recommendations for the veterinary field**
3. **To encourage the establishment of title protection nationally**

The Title Protection Survey was constructed utilizing the Qualtrics survey platform and respondents were kept completely anonymous. The survey was distributed to veterinary professionals and paraprofessionals through multiple modalities, including veterinary-specific social media sites, the NAVTA newsletter, and NAVTA member email, in which the total number of respondents surveyed were **3,775.** NAVTA members made up 66.1% of all survey respondents (2,436 members).

Multiple data points were analyzed and cross-referenced to evaluate title protection from multiple perspectives, including variations in credentialing, route of obtaining credentialing, the state of practice, knowledge of state-specific practice act language, primary species worked with, and experience level. The survey also included questions evaluating whether respondents had approached the state regulatory agency or practice management regarding title protection enforcement and their perception of the results.

Support for Title Protection—Aggregate Results

The overall results of the survey indicated that 91.7% of respondents are in support of title protection, with 7% neutral. Support of title protection based on recognized credentialing is detailed in *Table 5*.

TABLE 5. Support for title protection based on recognized credentialing

Credential Veterinary Technicians (CVT, LVT, RVT, LVMT)	95.38% - support	4% - neutral
DVMs	94.29% - support	5% - neutral
Practice Manager	86.14% - support	12% - neutral
Veterinary Technician students	80.75% - support	15% - neutral
Non-Credentialed Veterinary Assistants or Veterinary Assistants	57.79% - support	28% - neutral
Client Service	57.14% - support	36% - neutral

NAVTA members made up 66.1% of the survey respondents. Of the 2,436 NAVTA members that participated in this survey, 2,342 (96%) provided an answer to the question: "Would you like title protection to be established and enforced universally for our profession?" The results indicated 2,187 (93.4%) of the NAVTA members stated they want title protection to be established and enforced universally for our profession.

Our results indicate that 93.4% of NAVTA members want title protection to be established and enforced universally for our profession.

Among participating NAVTA members, 135 (5.8%) were neutral and 20 (0.9%) stated they did not want title protection established.

For the 1,199 non-NAVTA members who participated in the survey, a total of 1,058 (88.2%) stated they want title protection established (*Table 6*).

TABLE 6. NAVTA Member Responses

P-Value	< 0.00001			
Effect Size (Cramer's V)	0.103			
Sample Size	3,541			
Chi-Squared results				
Q10: Are you a NAVTA Member?	**Neutral**	**No**	**Yes**	**Total**
No	8.6%	3.2%	**88.2%**	100%
Yes	5.8%	0.9%	**93.4%**	100%

Support for Title Protection—By State

The geographic distribution of this survey allowed NAVTA to determine state-specific interest levels depicted with the map provided. The sample size included 3,519 respondents, of which the top participating states (>150 respondents) are included within the list below. The top participating state was California with 368 total participants, of which 334 (90.7%) are in favor of title protection (*Table 7*).

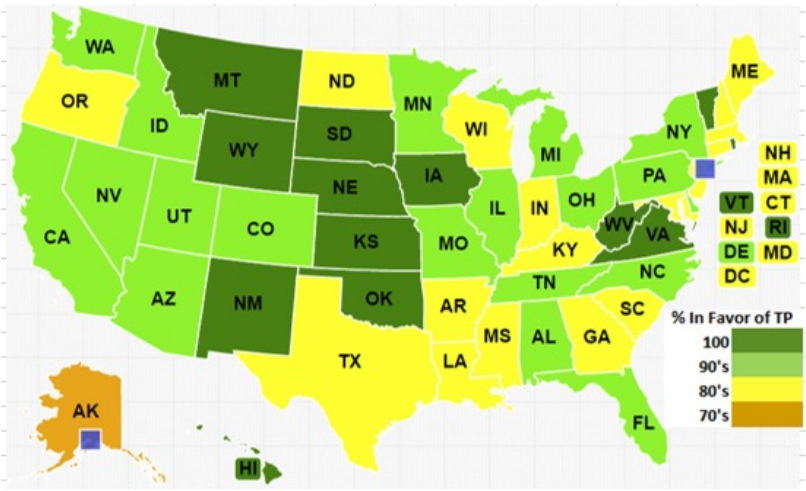

TABLE 7.
Support for title protection by state

State	Percentage in Favor of Title Protection	Respondents in Favor of Title Protection
California	90.7%	334 / 368
Colorado	92.4%	159 / 172
Ohio	94.3%	151 / 160
Texas	87.7%	151 / 172
Florida	92.3%	144 / 156
Pennsylvania	90.0%	144 / 160

Support for Title Protection—By Species of Practice

The species with which respondents primarily work did not indicate a variation of interest in title protection. Greater than 90% of respondents in the veterinary profession as a whole were in favor of title protection, regardless of the species with which they worked (*Table 8*). The predominant selected category from survey participants was small animal species, with 3,238 responses collected.

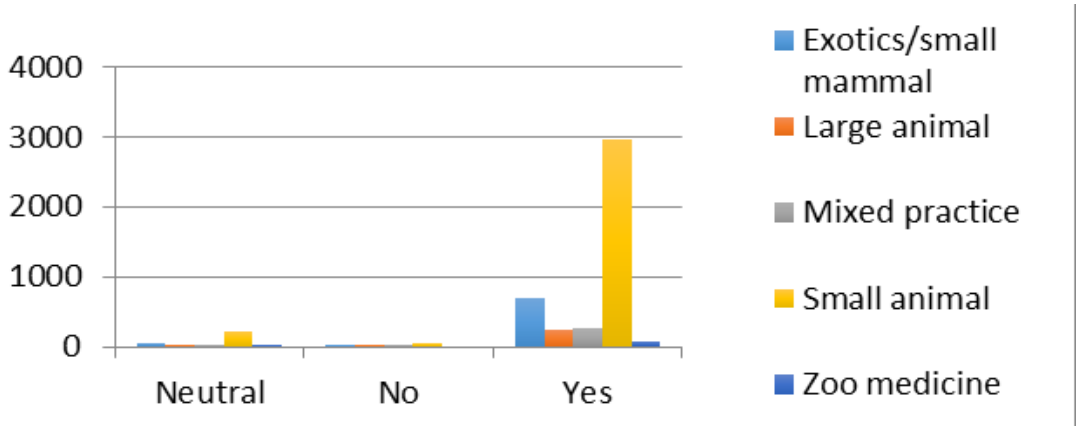

TABLE 8. Support for title protection by species of practice

Species of Practice	Percentage in Favor of Title Protection	Respondents in Favor of Title Protection
Small Animal	91.29%	2956 / 3238
Large Animal	93.98%	234 / 249
Mixed Practice	94.76%	271 / 286
Exotics/Small Mammal	91.05%	702 / 771
Zoo Medicine	97.56%	80 / 82

Support for Title Protection – Route of Credentialing

Credentialed veterinary technicians were categorized based on the route of obtaining their credentials. The majority of respondent veterinary technicians obtained their credential through the Associate Degree for Veterinary Technician route, totaling 2,330 respondents, of which 96% were in favor of title protection (*Table 9*). Overall, greater than 90% of respondents of all credentialing routes were in favor of title protection (*Table 10*).

TABLE 9. NAVTA Member Responses

Q2: How did you qualify for your veterinary technician credential (CVT, RVT, LVT, LVMT)?	Neutral	No	Yes	Total
Alternate route	18	3	203	224
Associate's veterinary nursing	2	0	61	63
Associate's veterinary technician	90	8	**2,232**	2,330
Bachelor's veterinary nursing	0	0	13	13
Bachelor's veterinary technician	8	1	254	263
Grandfathered	7	1	85	93
No veterinary technician credential	1	0	0	1
Total	**126**	**13**	**2,848**	**2,987**

TABLE 10. Credentialing routes of those in favor of title protection

In Favor of Title Protection by Credential Route	Percentage of Respondents
Bachelor of Science Degree in Veterinary Technician/Nursing	96.74%
Associate's Degree in Veterinary Technician/Nursing	95.82%
Grandfathered	91.40%
Alternate Route	90.62%

Support for Title Protection—Years of Experience

Respondents spanned from 0 to 30+ years of experience.The responses were not significantly different based on the years of experience, showing 90-94% in favor of title protection within the 3-30+ years of experience category (*Table 11*).

TABLE 11. Experience level of those in favor of title protection

Years of Experience	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Total Respondents
0—2 years	88%	258
3—5 years	91%	663
6—10 years	92%	812
11—15 years	94%	596
16—20 years	91%	471
21—25 years	90%	309
26—30 years	93%	183
30+ years	94%	211

Veterinary Field Awareness of Title Protection Laws

Participants of the survey were asked a series of questions to evaluate their knowledge level of title protection laws in their state. Results show that 40% of the respondents are misinformed about their state's title protection laws, but there was wide variability in the accuracy of responses.

For example, respondents were asked, *"Does your state restrict the title 'veterinary technician,' 'licensed/registered/certified veterinary technician,' or 'licensed veterinary medical technician' to those that are licensed through the state law?"* Responses were counted to be "accurate" when the response was consistent with the actual status of title protection in the state. The average accuracy for all responses was 60.9%, indicating that 40% of the respondents were misinformed about their state's title protection laws (*Table 12*).

TABLE 12. Does your state restrict the title "veterinary technician," "licensed / registered / certified veterinary technician," or "licensed veterinary medical technician" to those licensed through the state law?

State	Responded Yes to Survey Question	Responded No to Survey Question	Title Protection Exists in State Practice Act?	Accuracy in Survey Respondents' Response
Alabama	28	8	Yes	77.8%
Alaska	3	6	No	66.7%
Arizona	17	32	No	65.3%
Arkansas	5	12	Yes	29.4%
California	239	28	Yes	89.5%
Colorado	28	86	No	75.4%
Connecticut	4	22	No	84.6%
Delaware	5	10	Yes	33.3%
District of Columbia	1	2	No	66.7%
Florida	16	95	No	85.6%
Georgia	33	5	Yes	86.8%
Hawaii	5	1	Yes	83.3%
Idaho	6	4	No	40.0%
Illinois	37	41	Yes	47.4%
Indiana	64	5	Yes	92.8%
Iowa	4	13	No	76.5%
Kansas	1	21	No	95.5%
Kentucky	6	14	No	70.0%
Louisiana	1	14	Yes	6.7%
Maine	6	10	No	62.5%
Maryland	20	46	Yes	30.3%
Massachusetts	7	58	No	89.2%
Michigan	40	35	Yes	53.3%
Minnesota	14	39	No	73.6%
Mississippi	2	5	No	71.4%
Missouri	24	21	Yes	53.3%

It is important to note that for the purposes of this report, a state is recognized to have title protection only when it has adopted clear language prohibiting the use of veterinary technician titles without appropriate credentialing. If respondents considered the definition of veterinary technicians being present in the practice act language as title protection, it could have led to inaccurate responses. Qualifications being written into the definition of a veterinary technician could lead to enforceable title protection but are rarely exercised.

It is important to note that for the purposes of this report, a state is recognized to have title protection only when it has adopted clear language prohibiting the use of veterinary technician titles without appropriate credentialing.

TABLE 12. Does your state restrict the title "veterinary technician," "licensed / registered / certified veterinary technician," or "licensed veterinary medical technician" to those licensed through the state law?

State	Responded Yes to Survey Question	Responded No to Survey Question	Title Protection Exists in State Practice Act?	Accuracy in Survey Respondents' Response
Montana	1	5	No	83.3%
Nebraska	22	0	Yes	100.0%
Nevada	31	1	Yes	96.9%
New Hampshire	1	18	No	94.7%
New Jersey	14	51	No	78.5%
New Mexico	6	4	No	40.0%
New York	110	3	Yes	97.3%
North Carolina	92	22	No	19.3%
North Dakota	0	2	No	100.0%
Ohio	97	14	No	12.6%
Oklahoma	36	8	Yes	81.8%
Oregon	43	22	No	33.8%
Pennsylvania	30	67	Yes	30.9%
Rhode Island	3	5	No	62.5%
South Carolina	8	21	No	72.4%
South Dakota	1	1	No	50.0%
Tennessee	33	9	Yes	78.6%
Texas	65	61	Yes	51.6%
Utah	0	22	No*	100.0%
Vermont	0	6	No	100.0%
Virginia	71	7	No	9.0%
Washington	87	10	No	10.3%
West Virginia	7	0	Yes	100.0%
Wisconsin	30	11	No	26.8%
Wyoming	0	5	No	100.0%
			Average	**60.9%**

**The state of Utah did not have title protection at the time the survey was conducted.*

Respondents from states that have title protection laws in place had 69.0% accuracy in their knowledge of their state's laws (i.e., 31.0% of respondents thought title protection was in place in their state and was incorrect). Respondents from states that do not have title protection laws in place had 52.7% accuracy in their knowledge of their state's laws (i.e., 47.3% of respondents thought title protection was in place in their state and were incorrect).

When respondents were grouped by states that have no definition (i.e., no regulation) of veterinary technicians, and subsequently no title protection, the accuracy in their knowledge of their state's law was 82.3%. For respondents grouped by states that have title protection, and subsequently having veterinary technicians defined in the practice act, the accuracy in their knowledge of their state's law was 53.4%. These results imply that the status of title protection (i.e., the lack of) is clearer to those in states without any regulation. Individuals in states with title protection might have a difficult time realizing the existence of such a law due to poor compliance rates in their working environments.

Title Protection Violations—Notifying State Boards

Of those respondents who witnessed what they perceived as a title protection violation in their practice, 10.6% had contacted the state veterinary medical board regarding the violation (*Tables 13 and 14*). Respondents saw that there was an action towards enforcing title protection in 17.9% of the cases, while 42.0% saw no effect, and 40.6% did not know the outcome (*Table 15*). This indicates that 29.5% of known outcomes led to enforcement of title protection, while 70.5% did not. While the survey does not identify reasons why the respondent did not see their desired outcome, the large proportion of respondents stating that title protection was not upheld likely contributes to the general feeling that title protection is not respected across the nation (*Table 16*).

TABLE 13.
Proportion of Respondents that have Notified the State Board of Title Protection Violations

Number of Respondents	1,249
Yes, I have notified the state board	10.6%
No, I have not notified the state board	89.4%

TABLE 14. State Specific Reporting Rates (only states with more than 50 respondents are included in the chart)

States	Total Respondents per State	Percentage who reported violations	Percentage who did not report violations
California	192	5.21%	94.79%
North Carolina	79	8.86%	91.14%
New York	72	22.22%	77.78%
Ohio	71	9.86%	90.14%
Washington	69	8.70%	91.30%
Virginia	61	9.84%	90.16%
Texas	60	8.33%	91.67%
Indiana	54	3.70%	96.30%

TABLE 15.
Perceived Outcome of Reported Title Protection Violations

Number of Respondents	131
The Veterinary Medical Board acted and title protection was enforced	17.9%
There was no effect/enforcement	42.0%
I do not know the outcome	40.6%

TABLE 16. Reasons for Not Reporting Title Protection Violations

Number of Respondents	1,108
I didn't think it was a big enough of an issue	19.7%
I did not know reporting was an option	26.9%
Fear of retaliation	19.4%
The information on the method of reporting isn't readily available	13.6%
Other	20.4%

The vast majority (89.4%) of respondents had not notified the state veterinary medical board of the title protection violation they had witnessed. The reasons for opting not to report varied, with the highest percentage being simply that the respondent did not know of the option to notify the state veterinary medical board (26.9%), followed by the respondent not perceiving the issue to be significant enough (19.7%). Another prominent reason was the method of reporting not being readily available (13.6%). Within those that stated "other" (20.4%), a large proportion (47 out of 180, 26.11% of total responses) stated they felt notifying the state veterinary medical board would not make a difference. These reasons, which represented 65.5% of all respondents, indicate that there is a large need for the profession to educate ourselves on title protection state laws and highlight the importance of the reporting process established by state veterinary medical boards. Generally, the state veterinary medical board will only act when issues are brought forward to them.

Fear of retaliation continues to be a large factor (19.4% of responses) in preventing individuals from reporting title protection violations. Ideally, individuals should also be protected through whistleblower policies established by state veterinary medical boards.

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Enforcing Title Protection Within the Place of Employment

There were a total number of 2,547 respondents addressing the question, *"Have you had discussions with your practice management about establishing policy to prevent title misuse?"* The majority of respondents, 1,799 (70.6%), answered "no," they have not had a discussion with their practice management on title misuse (*Table 17*).

TABLE 17. "Have you had discussions with your practice management about establishing policy to prevent title misuse?"

Total Number of Respondents	2,547
Yes	29.4% (748)
No	70.6% (1,799)

Of the 1,799 respondents that answered "no", 1,760 provided a response on the reason, 41.8% of which indicated they did not think it would make a difference. Responses in the "Other" category varied significantly, notably that individuals were either happy with practice policies surrounding title use; had fears of creating conflict; and lack a voice in the practice (*Table 18*).

TABLE 18. Reasons for lack of discussion with practice management about establishing a policy to prevent title misuse

Total Number of Respondents	1,760
I did not think it was a significant issue	19.5% (343)
Did not think it would make a difference	41.8% (735)
Fear of retaliation	9.7% (170)
Other	29.0% (512)

There were 748 respondents that answered "yes" to having a conversation with the practice management on title misuse, and 275 (36.9%) stated there was no effect. The conversation resulted in a policy enforcing title protection for 212 (28.5%) of the respondents, and 207 (27.8%) said there has been progress with enforcement, but the issue has not been fully resolved.

TABLE 19.
Outcome when discussion was initiated about establishing a strategy to prevent title misuse

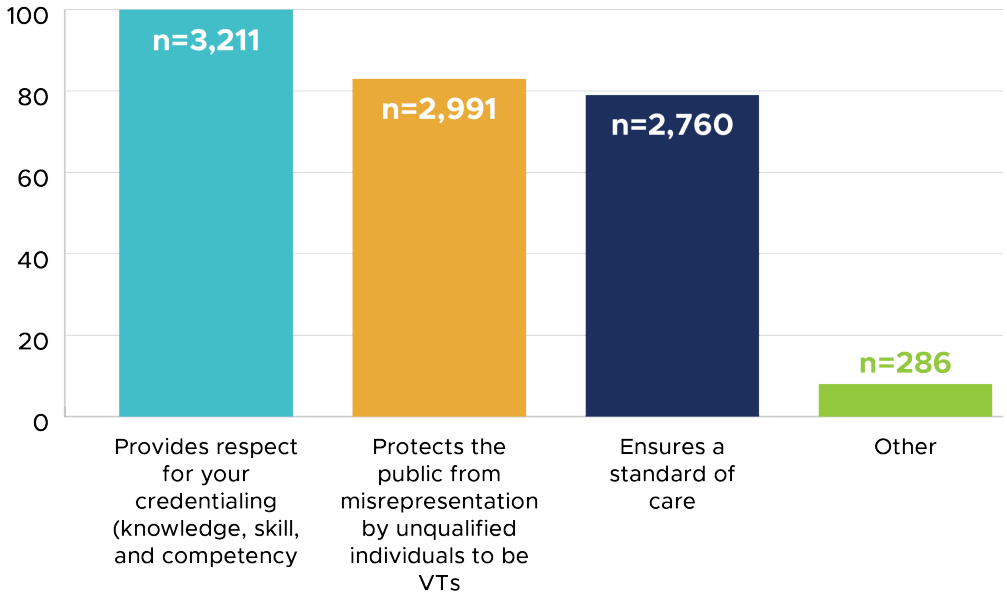
Total Number of Respondents	748
The practice management acted and the policy was enforced	28.5% (212)
Progress has been made, but not fully resolved	27.8% (207)
There was no effect	36.9% (275)
I do not know the outcome	6.8% (54)

The results from this survey have illustrated there is significant interest in the support and enforcement of title protection for credentialed veterinary technicians.

Why Is Title Protection Important To You?

The results from this survey have illustrated there is significant interest in the support and enforcement of title protection for credentialed veterinary technicians. When asked for the reason of importance, the majority of the responses selected was to "provide respect for your credentialing (knowledge, skill, and competency)". The following chart provides the description of each of the available response options, along with the number of responses received for each selection. The "Other" response option allowed the respondent to provide their own answer as to why title protection is important or not important to them (*Chart 1*).

CHART 1. Why is title protection important to you? Check all that apply.



Recommendations

The practice act compilation and survey results indicate several areas of needed change and opportunities for the veterinary field to elevate the veterinary technician profession through better title protection. These recommendations fall within legislative and non-legislative avenues and will require the combined efforts put forward by organizations, practices, and individuals. The NAVTA Veterinary Nurse Initiative makes the following recommendations:

Recommendations for State Legislatures and Regulatory Agencies

1. Establish and Strengthen Title Protection in All States

With 31 states and jurisdictions currently without any level of title protection, the NAVTA Veterinary Nurse Initiative urges state regulatory bodies to establish title protection at the "general protection" level.

- In jurisdictions currently without regulation for veterinary technicians, efforts directed at establishing licensure, including language protecting "veterinary technician," are needed (CO, CT, FL, MA, MN, NH, NJ, Puerto Rico, RI, VT, WY).
- In jurisdictions currently regulating veterinary technicians without title protection, efforts directed at establishing title protection by amending the current laws to protect "veterinary technician" as a title are needed (AL, AR, AZ, DC, IA, KS, KY, ME, MS, NM, NC, ND, OH, OR, SC, SD, VA, WA, WI).
- In states currently regulating veterinary technicians with limited protection, efforts directed at strengthening title protection by amending the current laws to protect "veterinary technician" and/or to establish general protection (IL, LA, MD, MI, MO, NE, PA, TX, UT, WV).
- In states that do not protect the credential abbreviation for veterinary technicians, efforts directed at strengthening title protection by amending the current laws to protect "CVT", "LVT", or "RVT" respective to their state's credential are needed (all states aside from CA, HI, IL, IN, LA, MO, OK, PA, TX, WV).

Increasing awareness of the veterinary technician profession is of necessity to increase the standard of care. Highlighting educational requirements of veterinary technicians, along with economical and case management statistics that support the vital role the veterinary technician provides in the clinical setting, will encourage more interest by legislators.

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State veterinary technician associations should form collaborative relationships with state veterinary medical boards and state veterinary medical associations to advocate for legislative changes necessary to institute stronger title protection within their state. Veterinary professionals (veterinary technicians and veterinarians) should join their state and national advocacy organizations to create a collective voice to urge legislative change.

2. Establish a Clear Policy for Enforcement of Title Protection Laws in All States

Effective collaboration between political leaders at the national, state, and local levels of authority in developing, promoting, and enforcing the protection of the veterinary technician profession is required in order to bring stronger sanctions to the table for those acting as veterinary professionals and performing medical care without a license.

With 10.57% of respondents notifying the state regulatory board of perceived title protection violations, and 17.56% of those seeing positive changes as a result, there is a need for focus on enforcement. While not all reports of title protection violation may be valid and we encourage all members of the profession to practice due diligence to accurately report title protection violations, a cumulative percentage of 1.86% of all reported cases seeing an effect is insufficient.

The state veterinary medical boards must regulate and enforce the practice acts in order to protect the public from un-

qualified individuals. With the varying levels of veterinary technician acknowledgment within the practice acts, along with varying levels of title protection, making recommendations for practice act amendments to be very clear about different titles and roles of each member of the team are required.

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State veterinary medical boards can raise awareness of existing title protection laws within the veterinary community to help prevent violations through their websites, notifications, letters, newsletters, and other communication avenues. The communication will encourage members of the profession, who currently do not notify the board because they feel it would not make a difference, to submit reports.

To increase oversight and enforcement of proper title usage and protection, anonymous reporting methods in which the evidence is provided upfront (e.g. improper use of titles on the website, name tags, scrub embroideries) are needed. Consider implementing whistleblower policies to protect the complainant where state law allows. To encourage proper use of titles, dissemination of educational material to all state licensees, notifying them of the practice act language and the established penalties for title protection violations is vital. Educational materials can be distributed to licensees indirectly through email lists and/or directly during the time of license renewal as an acknowledgment that the information was read and understood.

There are currently only five states with practice act language establishing clear penalties for title protection violation. Establishing clear penalties could also help improve compliance in combination with the exercising of general disciplinary actions.

Veterinary technician associations, veterinary medical associations, and veterinary professionals can express their concerns regarding title protection violations and call for improvement in enforcement practices by the state veterinary medical boards.

Recommendations for Veterinary Organizations

Academic Institutions

Veterinary schools and veterinary nursing/technology programs serve a key role in introducing young veterinary professionals to the roles of each member of the veterinary team, and the importance of making these distinctions. To accomplish this goal:

- Veterinary medical programs must support an understanding of the scope of practice of credentialed veterinary technicians, and the value they bring to a veterinary practice.
- Veterinary nursing/technology programs must instill in students the importance of working in an environment in which their credential is valued and recognized.
- Veterinary medical and veterinary nursing/technology programs must teach the specifics of state law as it applies to the use of titles and scope of practice for veterinary technicians.
- Veterinary medical, technology and nursing programs must encourage students to actively engage with organized veterinary medical and technician associations to promote standardization of credentialing and enforcement of title protection across states.

Veterinary Medical and Technician Associations

Veterinary medical associations and veterinary technician associations serve to advocate for the profession. The standards of the profession must be showcased by these organizations through:

- Promoting proper use of and clarifying employment role(s) of protected titles.

- Promoting the culture of title enforcement and clearly delineate team role categories.
- Providing a voice for veterinary technician members within their association.
- Creating a feedback system that collects information on issues important to veterinary technicians, such as title protection and scope of practice.
- Creating public and professional awareness of the veterinary technician's education, role and title.
- Continue working with state legislators and regulators to improve practice acts and governing laws/regulations.
- Initiate changes to title protection laws, and monitor and report on progress to membership.
- Promote best practices and standards to uphold title structures.
- Establish policies on proper title use for job postings, conference registration categories, etc.
- Educate the membership on routes in which team members can address title protection issues with veterinary practices and/or state veterinary medical boards.
- Consider creating a system to report title protection violations on a member's behalf, with appropriate protections to eliminate false claims.

Veterinary Practices

Veterinary practices play a key role to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each team member are clear and appropriate based on their title and licensure status. It is their obligation to not only adhere to the state practice acts but also to ensure the standard of patient care is met.

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Veterinary practices should establish clear expectations and policies in complying with title protection laws within their state. Even in states without state-regulated credentialing for veterinary technicians, there are private organizations issuing certifications for CVTs. Our recommendation is for practices in all states to reserve the term "veterinary technician" or "veterinary nurse" for those that have achieved credentialing. Those without credentialing as a veterinary technician are designated as "veterinary assistants" and should not be called "unlicensed veterinary technicians" or any other variants indicating the concept of non-credentialed technicians.

Veterinary technicians/nurses employed at practices that do not comply with title protection laws should bring the issue up with the practice management to implement appropriate policies.

For clear communications of title/role/responsibilities amongst team members and the public, veterinary practices can:

- Ensure that titles are clear (verbally and written) across all forms of operation (name tags, scrub colors, website/social media posts, introducing employees to clients).
- Promote a culture with encouragement to advance and acknowledge the earned titles of those who are licensed/have formal education/training.

Veterinary Technicians

Veterinary technicians must advocate for their profession, lead by example, and maintain a positive working relationship with all team members. As a professional, it is the technician's duty to know their role and state practice act language in regards to title protection.

In states without established title protection, veterinary technicians should advocate for such laws to be established through veterinary organizations. In states with established title protection, veterinary technicians should choose to work for practices that support education and licensing, speak up when title protection is not upheld, and work col-

The Job Title of "Veterinary Nurse" Should Be Reserved For Credentialed Technicians

The National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) strongly urges employers to reserve use of the job title "Veterinary Nurse" to those who hold valid Veterinary Technician credentials from their state.

A recent job ad search and report found 1500+ job ads using the term "Veterinary Nurse," leading the NAVTA board to issue a statement regarding the use of the job title.

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—those with a valid CVT, LVT, LVMT, or RVT designation. NAVTA urges that employers require credentials as a Veterinary Technician for those in Veterinary Nurse positions.

NAVTA also recommends that job postings specify that applicants must be credentialed Veterinary Technicians in accordance with state regulations.

Learn more at www.navta.net/policies.

NAVTA
National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America

laboratively with practice management to employ policies distinguishing credentialed veterinary technicians from others. The goal is to increase opportunities for employment in workplaces that value credentialed veterinary technicians. This includes full utilization of the technician, a positive work environment, and the ability to advance through education and training.

Veterinary Team Members (non-Veterinary Technicians)
Veterinary team members (non-veterinary technicians) make up a major portion of most veterinary practices. By becoming informed on what title protection is and why it is important, these team members can serve to have a large impact on the growth, sustainability, and respect for our profession. Veterinary team members can help through:

- Becoming informed on what title protection is, why it is important, and how it impacts them.
- Respecting titles and roles and work within the scope of each role.
- Claiming the appropriate title that is theirs and using them when addressing others and communicating with the public.
- Abstaining from the use of terminology of "unlicensed technicians" (language, literature, job ads, etc.)

Conclusion

To strengthen the veterinary technician/nursing profession, establishing and enforcing title protection is a critical component. These recommendations include paths to improve awareness, education, legislation, enforcement, and engagement by all members within the veterinary community. With the survey indicating an overwhelming response in favor of title protection, going forward to address the key elements of the current state of title protection and following through with the recommendations provided is necessary.

NAVTA
National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America

ABOUT NAVTA

NAVTA is a dynamic community of credentialed veterinary technicians dedicated to advancing the profession of veterinary nursing through advocacy, awareness, and professional development.

Founded in 1981 as a not-for-profit professional membership association, today NAVTA boasts of a membership of more than 8,500 credentialed Veterinary Technicians and veterinary staff members.

NAVTA's lengthy menu of valuable programs and services available to members includes:

- Strong, clear advocacy at the state and national levels
- Recognition, awards, and awareness campaigns
- The NAVTA Journal, a bi-monthly digital magazine
- NAVTA Newsletter, a monthly digital news service
- Career Center, featuring free career counseling and hundreds of job ads
- Complimentary virtual continuing education
- Professional and personal development resources
- Wellbeing resources
- Online library of clinical resources and case studies
- A strong, vibrant, diverse community where everyone has a voice and is heard
- Discounts on valuable programs, such as FearFree, AAFP's Cat Friendly Certificate Program, I Love Veterinary, and so much more.

In addition, NAVTA is cultivating the next generation of Veterinary Technicians through its creation and administration of the Approved Veterinary Assistant (AVA) program. The AVA program is a natural first step for anyone interested in a career path to become a credentialed Veterinary Technician.

For more information about NAVTA, the AVA Program, or any of the veterinary technician specialty areas, please visit www.navta.net.

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