



24 June 2019

Christen Puckett-Smith, BS, RVT, LSHC-S
President, Oklahoma Veterinary Technician Association
One Murray Campus – Veterinary Technology Program
Tishomingo, OK 73460

Dear Ms. Puckett-Smith,

I wholeheartedly support the Veterinary Nurse Initiative and the National Association of Veterinary Technicians of America (NAVTA), as they pursue a national credential change to Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN). I actively support the Oklahoma Veterinary Technician Association (OVTA) and other advocates to advance state legislation for the title change and for updated title protection. I fully endorse NAVTA's nationwide efforts to standardize the title and credential for the veterinary nursing profession in terms of credentialing requirements, title, and scope of practice.

As Program Director for 20 years, I naturally have partiality for the VNI. This experience also provides me considerable understanding of the RVT profession. In private and emergency practice, and continuing currently, I am fortunate to work with highly-trained, credentialed technicians. They significantly improve the quality of patient care, quality of client relationships and practice income.

Registered Veterinary Technicians merit improved recognition. The public is confused by the term veterinary technician; however, when described as "veterinary nursing", there is immediate understanding. Perception is further confused through the varied terms used by veterinarians for RVTs, and the assorted terms codified by different state practice acts. I applaud efforts toward a cohesive national credential and nomenclature.

I highly respect the human nursing profession; they have worked diligently for their own advancement. Similar consideration should be extended to veterinary nurses. The nomenclature "veterinary nurse" is used elsewhere in the world, specifically the United Kingdom and Australia. The term nurse is not copywritten nor restricted, just as "doctor" is not restricted when referring to other medical, dental and veterinary professionals.

Lest we return to grandfathering veterinarians, I believe we all value education. Veterinarians work diligently for our title and position, so do our credentialed veterinary nurses. RVT's complete a 2 year degree – as do RN's; there are Bachelor's degree options – as with RN's. There are 16 specialty academies that have rigorous criteria and credentialing – as do nursing and veterinary Boards and Academies.

Those in opposition perhaps would alter their stance if they too would realize the vital role of RVT's. These roles include providing quality medical and surgical care, prevention of illness and injury, optimization of health, facilitation of healing, and alleviation of suffering. They are integral for client communication and are important in the promotion of public health, including One Health and disaster assistance.

As veterinarians and as Oklahoma citizens, we should applaud the formal education attained by our RVTs. They are highly skilled, and place strong emphasis on life-long learning. Common credentialing and nomenclature are important for the profession to grow, not only for veterinary nursing, but for all veterinary medicine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jan Barnett, DVM". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jan Barnett, DVM
Program Director and Associate Professor
Veterinary Technology Program
Tulsa Community College