

Call to Order

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine Veterinarian Shortage Study Workgroup's LVT Scope of Practice subgroup was called to order at 10:02 a.m. on September 9, 2024, at the Virginia Farm Bureau Auditorium, 12580 West Creek Parkway, Richmond, VA 23238.

Chair

Kelli G. Moss, Executive Director, Board of Veterinary Medicine

Workgroup Participants Present

Charles Broaddus, DVM, PhD, Dip. ACT, VA Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Thomas B. Massie, Jr., DVM, Board of Veterinary Medicine

Patricia Seeger, LVT, AAS, BBA, Board of Veterinary Medicine

Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau

Carol Heizer, LVT, Virginia Association of Licensed Veterinary Technicians (VALVT)

Susan Seward, Virginia Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA)

Senator Timmy French, Senate District 1 (attended electronically)

William T. Swecker, DVM, PhD, DACVN, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine (attended electronically)

Beth Venit, VMD, American Association of Veterinary State Boards (attended electronically)

Jane Naramore, LVT, Virginia Association of Licensed Veterinary Technicians (attended electronically)

Stacy Anderson, DVM, Mvsc, PhD, DACVS-LA, Lincoln Memorial College of Veterinary Medicine (attended electronically)

Workgroup Participants - Not Present

Julia Murphy, DVM, Virginia Department of Health

Daniel Givens, DVM, PhD, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine

Staff

Yetty Shobo, PhD, Director, Healthcare Workforce Data Center & Data Analytics Division (HWDC), Department of Health Professions (DHP)

Matt Novak, Policy & Economic Analyst, DHP (attended electronically)

Laura L. Jackson, MSHSA, Board Administrator

Laura D. Paasch, Senior Licensing & Operations Specialist

Taryn Singleton, LVT, Discipline Case Specialist (attended electronically)

Public Present

Bom Harris, DVM, Virginia Academy of Food Animal Practitioners
Teresa Dockery, Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters (attended electronically)

Caroline Buscaglia, Virginia Tech Assistant Director for State Government Relations (attended electronically)

Jake Tabor, Virginia Farm Bureau (attended electronically)

Aria Lovelace (attended electronically)

Call to Order

The participants were welcomed, and introductions were made.

Ordering of Agenda

Ms. Kelli Moss opened the floor to any edits or corrections regarding the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was accepted as presented.

Public Comment

Ms. Moss noted that the Virginia Association of Licensed Veterinary Technicians (VALVT) provided written public comment dated September 9, 2024, on the date of this meeting. The VALVT requested this subgroup consider three points during its discussions:

- Recognition of the profession and title protection
- Telemedicine and LVTs' roles in providing real-time assessment and treatment, and
- Utilization of task list developed by the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) to consider expansion of the LVTs' scope to affect productivity.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Moss opened the floor to any additions or corrections regarding the draft minutes from the July 8, 2024, LVT Scope of Practice subgroup meeting. Hearing no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

Discussion

Ms. Moss stated that at the July 8, 2024, meeting, this subgroup identified two action items and subsequently an additional discussion item was identified regarding data collection for the study. She reported that the supporting data subgroup had discussed additional survey questions to obtain data regarding veterinarians for this study. She introduced Dr. Yetty Shobo to facilitate discussions of additional questions specific to licensed veterinary technicians to include with the 2024 renewal survey.

Dr. Shobo reviewed the 2023 Veterinary Technician survey questions and led the subgroup in a discussion of potential questions to add to determine:

- What percentage LVTs work with large animals
- Radius of the counties in service area
- Amount of time spent traveling
- Species categories and percentage of time working with each species
- Public and private animal shelter work
- Whether working for multiple practices
- Time spent with animals in ambulatory versus stationary practices

The subgroup discussed adding a question to determine whether licensees believe they are currently utilized to the fullest extent allowed, by listing specific tasks that are restricted to LVTs.

In Dr. Julia Murphy's absence, Ms. Moss provided information obtained from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) regarding veterinary science courses offered to Virginia's high school students.

Ms. Moss stated these courses exist, but access is limited by the lack of qualified instructors. She noted, LVTs are endorsed to teach high school courses in the Animal System pathway.

The subgroup discussed challenges to endorse LVTs as instructors in that the current K-12 educational system is not designed to allow for instructors not within the system to teach a course. Some veterinary practices are engaged in immersion training programs, which may require strong administration skills by someone within the practice, permission for underage students to participate and an involved superintendent to match up internships at a veterinary practice. It is also subject to regulatory oversight by government agencies including the Department of Education and the Department of Labor.

The subgroup discussed the need to educate veterinary students and veterinarians about the use of LVTs' full scope of practice, and the considerations needed to expand large animal training in the LVT schools' curriculum.

The subgroup also discussed other opportunities to introduce LVT careers to students who wish to pursue veterinary medicine but may not have the opportunity to attend veterinary school due to limited class sizes. Outreach to agricultural high school students and animal science majors was also discussed, along with the challenges of developing different pre-veterinary medicine educational tracks to facilitate veterinary technology learning. For college graduates, veterinary technology program requirements create additional educational burdens to qualify for licensure.

Dean Daniel Givens was not present to provide information on outreach by Virginia's LVT programs. Dr. Terry Swecker reported Dean Givens has reached out to the respective LVT educational programs and obtained information.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Moss will follow up with Dean Givens to include this information in the next Workgroup meeting's agenda.

The subgroup discussed the broad scope of utilizing LVTs in a practice and whether a focused effort on training and retaining LVTs in rural areas with large animal veterinarians will help resolve the current shortage.

Additionally, if LVTs feel they are not being delegated to perform a task within their scope of practice, the Workgroup may consider developing clearer guidance on LVT utilization as a solution. The direct and indirect supervision of LVTs should be addressed in this guidance.

The subgroup discussed that relatively few veterinarians are pursuing large animal practice. Incoming students show roughly 50% interest to pursue mixed animal medicine, but only approximately 20% of students are graduating in mixed animal medicine. By one report, in 2023 there were 32 large animal veterinarians who graduated in the United States. Additionally, attrition of large animal veterinarians is high due to working conditions and hours.

This led this group to discuss community organization needed to create integrated facilities for large animal medicine. One possible solution is to create a model for a large animal, multi-use haul-in facility with lights and heat that incorporates skilled, license staff to maximize available resources and support for large animal veterinarians. A financial model could be developed to include a veterinarian-in-charge that is required for every establishment, incorporate LVTs to fulfill roles in practice and administration, and issuing privileges to use the facility. This could be modelled after small animal veterinary practice cooperatives and local economic development agencies could be used to identify veterinary "deserts" where a need for this model exists.

New Business

Dr. Bom Harris opened a discussion about the written public comment submitted by the VALVT that appeared to advocate for expansion of practice outside of the current scope for LVTs. Dr. Harris stated veterinarians are often "boots on the ground" identifying issues of public health and safety while on farm calls that may not be recognized by someone without a veterinary medicine education. She was unclear how LVTs would be supervised on separate calls, as a large animal veterinarian's day is dynamic, and this may impact the timeliness of arrival when

immediate assistance by a veterinarian is required. She expressed concern that the discussions have not focused on ambulatory practice, but this is where the shortages exist.

Representatives from the VALVT present at the meeting stated the intent of the public comment was to suggest using the AABP task list as a model, rather than to adopt the current list. The VALVT representatives stated their intention to submit an amended public comment providing clarification of this organization's position.

Next Meeting

Ms. Moss informed the subgroup that the next full Workgroup meeting will be scheduled between October 8-10, 2024. A poll will be sent to all workgroup members to determine the exact date and time.

Adjournment

With no objection, Ms. Moss adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

Kelli G. Moss, Executive Director
Chair