

Call to Order

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinarian Shortage Study Workgroup, LVT Scope of Practice subgroup was called to order at 1:48 p.m. on July 8, 2024, at the Department of Health Professions (DHP), Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, 2nd Floor, Board Room 3, Henrico, Virginia 23233.

Chair

Kelli G. Moss, Executive Director

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
William T. Swecker, DVM, PhD, DACVN, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
Daniel Givens, DVM, PhD, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau
Julia Murphy, DVM, Virginia Department of Health
Jane Naramore, LVT, Virginia Association of Licensed Veterinary Technicians
Cliff Williamson, Virginia Agribusiness Council

Staff Present

Erin Barrett, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
Laura Jackson, MSHSA, Board Administrator
Laura D. Paasch, Senior Licensing & Operations Specialist
Taryn Singleton, LVT, Board of Veterinary Medicine

Public Present

Jake Tabor, Virginia Farm Bureau

Public Attending Electronically

Carol Heizer, LVT
Senator Timmy French, Senate District 1
Stacy Anderson, DVM, Mvsc, PhD, DACVS-LA, Lincoln Memorial College of Veterinary Medicine

Call to Order

The participants were welcomed, and introductions were made.

Ordering of Agenda

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

Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Discussion

Consideration of practice expansion: The subgroup discussed the need to utilize licensed veterinary technicians (LVTs) to the full extent of their current scope of practice, and to provide education to veterinarians about the benefits of LVTs to the large animal veterinary community. Veterinarians may not understand how an LVT can assist in a large animal practice despite general interest in using one. An LVTs' role in revenue generation was discussed as utilizing an LVT often results in significant financial benefits by allowing veterinarians to increase service capabilities and geographic ranges. Broadly communicating the full capabilities of LVTs may also serve as a recruiting tool to increase the number of large-animal veterinary technicians.

Certification/Training Programs: Most training for veterinary technology students is not large-animal based and the subgroup discussed the need to make more large-animal training available to veterinary technology students. The low ratio of LVTs to licensed veterinarians in Virginia was also discussed.

Alternate educational pathways were considered, including transferrable credits from agricultural classes and feasibility of integrating LVTs into Animal Sciences educational programs, which could be promoted as alternate educational pathways. Raising younger students' interest in veterinary technology through a high-school veterinary assistant program provides students with an early pathway. A program should focus on creating a viable career path.

Currently, 28 4-year schools offer a bachelor's degree in veterinary technology. Lincoln Memorial University has a master's LVT program that may develop into a mid-level practitioner program. Similar programs are being developed in Colorado and Florida. At the same time, there are available seats at LVT schools and a shortage of LVTs in practice. The VALVT's practice questionnaire received five responses from large animal practice LVTs, only three of whom were currently practicing.

Other challenges: The subgroup discussed considerations in considering a career as a licensed veterinary technician, including salary ranges, which for LVTs may be half the salary of a nurse with the same level of education. The subgroup discussed what Dean Givens termed LVTs' "branding issue" as The title "technician" is used synonymously within the veterinary community whether it is a licensed technician or an unlicensed assistant. Dr. Murphy offered that the practice of veterinary technology should be considered an integral part of the patient care team rather than a lesser veterinary medical profession.

Senator French pointed to the need to develop a sustainable career path to address shortages in certain geographic areas. He noted that the role food animal veterinary technician may be a difficult option to present to current potential students because most have never been exposed to agricultural settings.

Another consideration is that LVT programs do not currently offer rolling enrollment, which may create a barrier. Challenges to the efforts to increase LVTs are impacted by their higher workloads, lower salaries and higher educational prerequisites that students may not be prepared to meet.

The subgroup discussed ways to increase educational outreach at the middle and high school levels to advise students on taking prerequisites for veterinary technology education. Vocational agricultural organizations such as Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4H have an opportunity to introduce veterinary technology to a younger population.

Dr. Murphy reported the Department of Health is working with the Department of Education (DOE), using modules to educate children about occupational health, and a stated module featuring LVTs could be created for it. Resources within the Virginia Cooperative Extension, DOE and the FFA were identified for additional information.

College coaches, who are employed by community colleges to work in high schools could include information about an LVT career path when coaching students. The subgroup discussed initiating outreach efforts with the directors of three primary LVT schools in Virginia.

The following Action Items were developed:

ACTION ITEM: Dr. Murphy will reach out to Dr. Gutter and the Virginia College Advising Corps to provide veterinary technology information.

ACTION ITEM: Dean Givens will reach out to LVT programs to coordinate outreach efforts.

Next Steps:

The subgroup agreed to meet again in early September to review the additional information gathered to present a comprehensive data overview to the Workgroup during its next meeting projected for early October.

New Business

There was no new business to report.



Next Meeting

The next subgroup meeting date is to be determined by Ms. Moss after polling subgroup participants.

Adjournment

With no objection, Ms. Moss adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

Kelli G. Moss, Executive Director
Chair

DRAFT