



# JOURNAL

VETERINARY NURSING IN ACTION

2017 CONVENTION ISSUE



COMPLIMENTS OF



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*Yes They Will Eat*



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ON THE COVER



Kathy Parascandola, CVT provides nursing care to a senior patient. While not at work at Harlingen Veterinary Clinic in Belle Mead, NJ, she enjoys spending time with her family and dogs, Ginger and Cocoa.

*Photo courtesy of Nick Mistretta.*

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**NAVTA**

**Executive Director:** Julie Legred, CVT  
P.O. Box 1227, Albert Lea, MN 56007  
Phone: 888-99-NAVTA | Fax: 507-489-4518  
info@navta.net | www.navta.net

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**NAVTA National Credential and Title Change Task Force:**

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**NAVTA Public Relations Committee:**

Stephen Cital, RVT, RLAT, SRA, VTS (Lab Animal)

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**NAVTA State Representative Committee:**

Ken Yagi, BS, RVT, VTS (ECC, SAIM)

**NAVTA Veterinary Assistant Committee:**

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# NAVTA EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

The National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America has grown by leaps and bounds since appointing a Credentialed Veterinary Technician as its Executive Director and asking the Executive Board to take more accountability in strategic planning. In December of 2015, NAVTA Leaders met with Bob Harris, CAE to participate in a two day Strategic Planning Session. The mission statement was evaluated and redeveloped to represent the new NAVTA, giving direction for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Four Strategic Initiatives were developed, all of which contribute to the Mission of NAVTA.



**Tip:** CHECK OUT Bob's site for everything related to association management! [www.rchcae.com](http://www.rchcae.com)

## Implementing Best Practices in Association Management

State Veterinary Technician Associations and Academies may benefit from implementing Best Practices in Association Management. Over the past year, NAVTA's leaders have worked diligently in creating policies, procedures, updating bylaws and meeting regularly. In January of 2016, NAVTA's leaders began tackling the job of being self-managed (in the past, other companies managed the national association, with varying degrees of oversight). The Executive Board, Committee Chairs

and Task Force Chairs dug their heels in, rolled up their sleeves and went to work, designing a strategic plan, outlining its execution and bringing projects to fruition.

NAVTA is a volunteer based, leadership driven organization, with a small number of dedicated, passionate individuals, JUST LIKE YOUR ORGANIZATION. Since we have chosen to define our path, declared the needs in association management and made great progress, your organization can as well. Our resources are similar to yours. We can learn and support each other in association management.

**The following is an overview of the Best Practices NAVTA embraced and implemented in association management this past year.**

- **Monthly Meetings:** Executive Board and Leaders (consisting of Committee Chairs and Task Force Chairs) meet monthly, powering through a full agenda, approving minutes, reviewing written reports and finance statements, and considering Board recommendations. Oftentimes the Board will vote on recommendations and may initiate an Executive Session to further discuss topics of concern.

**Tip:** Use Dropbox or other cloud based software to maintain communication between leaders.

- **Updated Bylaws:** Association's bylaws are referred to in the management of the organization, explicitly outlining how the organization is to run, as a business. The Legal Committee updated the bylaws to reflect the way NAVTA has transitioned in self-management. The bylaws are currently being reviewed by the organization's attorney and will be sent to the membership in 2017 for approval.

**Tip:** Bylaws are the association's legal document regarding how it functions and who it serves. Seek advice when updating by speaking with an attorney (oftentimes pro-bono).

- **Leadership Manual:** Another project the Legal Committee accomplished was the creation of an updated Leadership Manual and the on boarding of new officers. The Leadership Manual outlines expectations of leaders, the history of the organization, and answers to frequently asked questions.

**Tip:** You do not have to reinvent the wheel in designing a leadership manual. You can refer to other organizations, using what works best for your organization. On boarding is crucial!

Your leadership manual will help in transitioning leaders.

- **Policies:** Executive Board members, with the Legal Committee, identified policies and guidelines for the NAVTA Staff and leadership to follow. The Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest, Antitrust and Logo policies were updated, along with the Professional and Reimbursement Policy.

**Tip:** There are 25 common policies an organization should consider implementing.

- **Operation Manuals:** Each of the Committees created an Operations Manual identifying their charge, expectations of committee members, how the committee reports to the Executive Board and outlining tasks the committee performs on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

**Tip:** Design a template for your committees to refer to when creating their Operations Manual. Similar to veterinary hospitals, this is a living document, morphing and changing as the committee matures.

- **Financial Reports and Budgeting:** The Finance Committee (with the aid of the Executive Director) creates snapshots of the association's financial accounts on a monthly basis. Annually (the beginning of the calendar year) the Finance Committee generates a budget for the upcoming year, approved by the Executive Board.

**Tip:** Financial reporting and tracking is crucial to an association's success. If you don't know where you are, how will you know where you are going? Creating a budget is the first step; refer to it often and report to the

leaders on the progress being made. A budget is a projection, essentially guessing what the future will hold.

- **Governance:** As you may be aware, the Executive Board is tasked with Governance of the association. It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to maintain financial accountability and fiduciary oversight. When the Executive Board meets, their concern is management of the association, ensuring membership benefits are improving, services are increasing and the organization is growing.

**Tip:** Oftentimes the Executive Board gets caught in the "business" of the organization. It is their job to govern. Sure, your Board Members may sit on a committee, but governance is the Board's charge. Voting on policies, financial decisions and big picture items is the Board's role.

- **Database:** An organization is only as good as its database! That may seem an odd statement, but it is true. In the past, NAVTA's database was less than ideal. With the new database system, we will be able to improve membership outreach and tracking, improving the membership's experience.

**Tip:** You may feel an Excel spreadsheet is the best technology for your membership database. PLEASE consider other software that will assist you in building stronger relationships with your members.

The NAVTA Executive Board is available to you anytime. View our website to get into direct contact with board members.

**Ask questions, provide feedback or get involved!**

# NAVTA'S 2017 EXECUTIVE BOARD



**Mary Berg,**  
BS, RLATG, RVT,  
VTS (Dentistry),  
President

Mary received her B.S. in Biology/Microbiology from South Dakota

State University after traveling to many locations worldwide with her military husband. In 1992, they moved to Lawrence, KS where she earned an A.S. in Laboratory Animal Science from Redlands Community College and an A.S. in Veterinary Technology from St. Petersburg College. She is a Charter member of the Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians and received her Veterinary Technician Specialty in Dentistry in June 2006.

In addition to serving as the NAVTA President, Mary is currently serving as the treasurer of the AVDT and is the president-elect of the Kansas VTA. Mary worked in research for over 24 years, specializing in products aimed at improving oral health of companion animals. She was the practice manager and dental technician specialist at Gentle Care Animal Hospital in Lawrence, Kansas for over seven years, taught veterinary technology at Wright Career College for two years and is currently the president of Beyond the Crown Veterinary Education, a veterinary dental consulting service.

Mary serves as the dental board's moderator and instructor for VSPN. She holds memberships in the Foundation for Veterinary Dentistry and serves on the Education Outreach and the Make Me Smile committees, as well being a member of the Association for Veterinary Technician Educators and VetPartners. Mary has published several articles in various professional publications, and is a speaker and lab instructor at International, national and state Conferences.

Mary is a 4-H volunteer and is active in her church and community. Mary and her husband, Doug, have two sons and live on a farm with a menagerie of animals.



**Kara M. Burns,**  
MS, MEd, LVT,  
VTS (Nutrition),  
VTS-H (Internal  
Medicine,  
Dentistry),  
President Elect

Kara Burns is a licensed veterinary technician originally from New England, now living in Kansas. She holds a master's degree in physiology and a master's degree in counseling psychology. She began her career in human medicine working as an emergency psychologist in the Maine Medical Center emergency department. She also worked at Maine Poison Control as a poison specialist dealing with human and animal poisonings. She then made the move to veterinary medicine and worked in small animal private practice and a small animal and avian practice in Maine.

Kara is the Founder and President of the Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians, the tenth recognized specialty for veterinary technicians, and has attained her VTS (Nutrition). She teaches nutrition courses around the world on the VIN/Veterinary Support Personnel Network and on VetMedTeam. She also is a contributor to Lafebervet.com and is an independent nutritional consultant.

She is a member of many national, international, and state associations and holds positions on many boards in the profession, including the AAVN executive board technician liaison, the NAVTA Journal assistant editor in chief, NAVTA Communications Director, Veterinary Team Brief

Advisory Board, VSPN Nutrition Board Moderator, International Society for Sports Nutrition, and is the president of the Kansas Veterinary Technician Association.

She has authored many articles, textbooks, and textbook chapters and is an internationally invited speaker, focusing on topics of nutrition, leadership, and technician utilization.

Ms. Burns has been featured on the cover of the Veterinary Technician Journal and the NAVTA Journal. She was named the 2013 North American Veterinary Conference Technician Speaker of the year, has been granted an honorary VTS from both the Dental and Internal Medicine Academies, and received the 2011 Dr. Franklin Loew Lecturer Award. Kara has also been named the National Association of Professional Women 'Woman of the Year' for 2010-2011 and the Cambridge Who's Who in Professionals V.I.P. for 2010-2011. She was accepted into the International Women's Leadership Association in 2012.

She enjoys spending time with her wife Dr. Ellen Lowery and their children. They are actively involved in coaching youth sports, 4-H, school activities, and church ministry. The family also includes two horses, two sheep, a pug, a French bulldog, five birds, four indoor cats (one of which is three legged), a guinea pig, a blue-tongue skink, and a bearded dragon!



**Beckie Mossor,**  
RVT, Secretary

Beckie has had a passion for animals her whole life. As a child, she participated in 4-H and

obedience training, and then volunteered with obedience trainers and wildlife rehabilitators while in college. Beckie graduated

with her degree in Veterinary Medical Technology in 2007 and became licensed that same year. Since 2008, Beckie has served on the Executive Board for the North Carolina Association of Veterinary Technicians. In 2014, she began serving as Treasurer for the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America.

Beckie has published several articles in various professional publications and enjoys speaking at National Conferences across the country. Beckie lives and works in Wilmington, NC, where she is Executive Director of 3K9 Working Dogs, Inc. She owns Techs For Pets, LLC, a consulting and relief service company, as well as K9 Fitness, a personal training service for people and their pets. Whenever possible, Beckie enjoys getting to the beach to fish, run, or just hang out with her husband Timmy. Her fur family is made up of five dogs and two cats, most of which she was, of course, “not going to keep”!



**Eric Zamora-Moran, MBA, RVT, VTS (Anesthesia & Analgesia), Treasurer**

Eric Zamora-Moran always

knew he wanted to work with animals in a medical setting. His first veterinary job was at a single doctor practice in Chicago where he learned basic skills, eventually leading him to a position at the Chicago Veterinary Emergency Services. From these experiences grew a stronger compassion and care for animals, enabling him to pursue studies in a veterinary technology program so that he could become a certified Veterinary Technician. Eric graduated with an Associates of Applied Science in Veterinary Technology in 2009 from the Vet Tech Institute at Fox College in Tinley Park, IL.

To further nurture his talent, Eric moved to New York where he attended Mercy College and graduated with a BS in Veterinary Technology. While in New York, Eric worked in the surgery department at the Animal Specialty Center in Yonkers, tutored veterinary technology students at SUNY Westchester Community College, and then became an adjunct instructor. There he taught surgery, anesthesia and a review class for veterinary technician students.

After completing his goals in New York, Eric returned to Chicago and became a Surgery Technician supervisor at the Chicago Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center. While in Chicago, Eric pursued graduate studies in Business Administration, and also went through the rigorous process of becoming a Veterinary Technician Specialist (Anesthesia and Analgesia). Shortly after graduating with his MBA, Eric was admitted into a Doctor of Philosophy program with emphasis on Organizational Leadership (with anticipation of graduating in 2019). Since July 2015, Eric has been the Small Animal Surgery Tech Supervisor at Purdue University Veterinary Teaching Hospital.



**Stephen Cital, RVT, RLAT, SRA, VTS (Lab Animal), Member at Large and Public Relations Committee Chair**

Stephen originally started college to become an RN. This goal vanished after finding his real interest of veterinary nursing. Stephen instead became a Registered Veterinary Technician in California and obtained certification as a Surgical Research Anesthetist through the Academy of Surgical Research. He then pursued the designation of a Registered Laboratory

Animal Technician through the American Association of Laboratory Animal Sciences. Currently, he is the Anesthetic Nursing and Training Coordinator at United Veterinary Specialty and Emergency as well as a private contractor for several research organizations. Stephen also holds relief positions at the Oakland and San Francisco Zoos. In his spare time, Stephen enjoys writing book chapters and providing book reviews, lecturing nationally and internationally, moderating the discussion boards on The Veterinary Anesthesia Nerds Facebook page, VetBloom and serving as the President for the Society of Laboratory Animal Veterinary Technicians and Vice President for the California Registered Veterinary Technicians Association. He has one dog named Diego Luna and two mud turtles, Juana and Maria.



**Erin A. Spencer, M.Ed., CVT, VTS (ECC), Member at Large**

Erin is a CVT living in New Hampshire but working in Massachusetts.

The majority of her career has been spent working in Emergency and Critical Care picking up relief shifts whenever she can. She earned her VTS (ECC) in 2011. She has, however, moved to other adventures over the past several years. After spending time as the technician manager for IVG Hospitals, Inc. Erin transitioned full-time to the non-profit world. Working with the HSVMA Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) teaching program as both a field technician and as the group's volunteer coordinator, Erin realized that teaching was the path she wanted to pursue. She earned her M.Ed. in 2015 from Colorado State University and began teaching at Mount Ida College in the same year. Erin currently works as an Assistant Professor in the

Veterinary Technology program where she teaches a variety of courses. Her favorite is Introduction to Veterinary Technology, where she gets to welcome new students to the profession. Erin lectures both regionally and nationally and is currently working on a book focusing on neonatal and pediatric nursing care.

Erin has served on the board of the Massachusetts Veterinary Technician Association for a number of years and is the current president of the organization. She also serves on the NAVTA Approved Veterinary Assistant committee and both the nursing standards and mentor committee for the Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians (AVECCT).



**Julie Legred,**  
*CVT, Executive  
Director*

Julie graduated from the University of Minnesota—Waseca in

June, 1985 with an Associates in Applied Science in Animal Health Technology, and earned the credentials of Certified Veterinary Technician (CVT).

She has worked in many areas of veterinary technology including small animal and exotic practices, research, education (instructor and program director), swine genetics, corporate medicine, leadership, management and consulting.

Julie has been very active in the Minnesota Association of Veterinary Technicians for the past eighteen years including roles in board positions, and as chairperson of the membership, convention and sponsorship, practice act and veterinary technician committees. Julie has served on the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America as Member at Large and as President (2008 and 2011).

She was on the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (CVTEA) since 2005 as a full committee member and as of 2013, serves as an alumni member. Julie has also served on the AVMA's Convention Management and Planning Committee and is currently on their Task Force for Continuing Education. She has held the veterinary technician Board position on the Companion Animal Parasite Council since 2009.

She is also serving on the Fear Free Veterinary Visits Advisory Board and is very active on the Partners for Healthy Pets initiative.

Julie speaks on topics such as parasitology, leadership, career opportunities within veterinary technology and more. She has fun talking to kids about animal health care and dog bite prevention. Julie was awarded the Minnesota Veterinary Technician of the Year in 2005 and 2007.

Julie is also a hockey, baseball and football mom and has a role as a chauffer and food preparation agent, as she has four boys ages 12, 14, 16 and 28 years old and has a husband of 20 years.

## COMMITTEES/CHAIRPERSONS:

**Booth Representative:** Virginia Rudd, *CVT, RVT*

**CE Committee:** Vicky Ograin *MBA, RVT, VTS (Nutrition)*

**CVTS Committee:** Ann Wortinger, *BIS, LVT, VTS (ECC, SAIM, Nutrition)*

**Global Outreach Committee:** Ken Yagi, *BS, RVT, VTS (ECC, SAIM)* and Linda Markland, *RVT*

**Legal Committee:** Megan Brashear *CVT, VTS (ECC)*

**Membership Committee:** Liza Wysong Rudolph *BAS, CVT, VTS (CP-Canine/Feline, SAIM)*

**National Credential and Title Change Task Force:** Ken Yagi, *BS, RVT, VTS (ECC, SAIM)* and Heather Prendergast, *RVT, CVPM*

**Public Relations Committee:** Stephen Cital, *RVT, RLAT, SRA, VTS (Lab Animal)*

**SCNAVTA Committee:** Beckie Mossor, *RVT*

**State Representative Committee:** Ken Yagi, *BS, RVT, VTS (ECC, SAIM)*

**Veterinary Assistant Committee:** Dennis Lopez, *M.ED, B.SCI, LVT*



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# NAVTA'S 2016 VETERINARY TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR

**Kenichiro Yagi, BS, RVT, VTS (ECC, SAIM)**

*“Ken is always willing to answer questions and continually challenge his staff to never settle for how things have always been done, but to ask why. Under his leadership, the quality of medicine and care at Adobe has grown by leaps and bounds.”*

– Mary Ann Baik, RVT, VTS (ECC)

NAVTA received multiple letters of recommendation for Mr. Kenchiro Yagi, an ICU Supervisor and Blood Bank Manager at Adobe Animal Hospital in Los Altos, CA.

Ken is constantly discerning ways to move the profession forward and never stops championing the veterinary profession and every individual team member within the profession. He is a VTS in both Emergency and Critical Care and Small Animal Internal Medicine. Mr. Yagi speaks internationally on topics of ECC, Internal Medicine, and transfusion medicine. In addition, he is an accomplished author; he has written numerous journal articles and just recently published *Manual of Veterinary Transfusion Medicine and Blood Banking* with Marie K. Holowaychuk, DVM, DACVECC. Ken also serves as the recording secretary for the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society, the treasurer for the Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians, and the NAVTA

State Representative Committee chair. This past year, he became the co-chair of the National Credential and Standardization Task force for NAVTA, initiating conversations with global, national, and state organizations in regard to consumer protection and patient care by striving to implement the use of a single term. Ken also is on the board of directors of NAVC's Veterinary Innovation Council, and is the incoming Veterinary Technician Program Chair. On top of these phenomenal accomplishments, he is in the final stages of completing his Master's degree in Veterinary Science.

Ken not only gives back to the profession and professional associations, but also to the team members he meets across the country and around the world. Ken firmly believes that every individual should contribute to the veterinary team in a meaningful way. Ken has stated, "Asking 'Why?' to understand the 'What' and 'How' of the field, and consciously

incorporating evidence-based knowledge into our practice will lead to maintaining the latest and highest standards required of us to ensure positive outcomes, whenever possible."

The NAVTA Veterinary Technician of the Year award is to be presented to a NAVTA member who has been an active member of the association, providing leadership, and contributing to the association and the overall betterment of the industry. Mr. Kenichiro Yagi is the epitome of what this award recognizes. His tireless efforts to move the veterinary technician profession forward, one technician/nurse at a time, is to be applauded and emulated. His humble, thoughtful, and knowledgeable advocacy makes us proud to have him as a part of this profession, and to grant this award.

**Congratulations Ken, and thank you, for everything you do in this profession. We would not be where we are today, without you.**

*As Executive Director of VECCS, I am very familiar with Ken's contributions as a member of the VECCS Board of Directors. He is a total team player, always stepping up to assist wherever he can and always fulfilling his responsibilities with thoughtful due diligence. It appears there is no limit to how productive he can be.*

*In short, Ken Yagi is a very special individual. He is extremely talented, professional, knowledgeable, caring, and a very dedicated technician who continually seeks ways to help those around him. I give him my highest and strongest recommendation for Veterinary Technician of the Year. There could be no one more deserving than Ken.*

**Gary Stamp, DVM, MS  
Diplomate, ACVECC  
Executive Director, VECCS**



## Textbook Contributions:

***Veterinary Technician's Manual for Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care  
A Veterinary Nurse's Guide to Infection Prevention and Control  
Manual of Veterinary Transfusion and Medicine and Blood Banking  
Review Questions and Answers for Veterinary Technicians; 5th ed  
Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care for Veterinary Technicians  
Study Guide to the AVECCT Examination, 2nd ed***

## Leadership positions Ken has held within the Veterinary Technician Profession

<b>Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians (AVECCT)</b>	
Board of Directors	Treasurer
RECOVER Initiative	Technician Member
Nursing Standard Committee	Co-chair
Continuing Education Committee	Member
Exam Committee	Member
<b>Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians (AIMVT)</b>	
Credentialing Committee	Member
<b>American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB)</b>	
Regulatory Policy Task Force	Member
<b>Association of Veterinary Hematology and Transfusion Medicine (AVHTM)</b>	
Board of Directors	Member at Large
<b>National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA)</b>	
National Credential Task Force	Co-chair
State Representative Committee	Chairperson
<b>Veterinary Innovation Council</b>	
Board of Directors	Board Member
<b>Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (VECCS)</b>	
Board of Directors	Recording Secretary
Membership Committee	Chair
Facility Certification Committee	Advisory Member

# NAVTA BENEFITS

## As a NAVTA member you receive:

- The NAVTA Journal and NAVTA e-newsletter.
- **20%** membership discount if you are a specialist or member of your state association.
- **10%** discount on VetMedTeam.com courses!
- **10%** off Puppy Start Right for Instructors Course, hosted by the Karen Pryor Academy.
- **5%** discount on Disability Insurance through VetInsure.
- **20%** discount on Vetlexicon, the world's largest online clinical reference source, provided by Vetstream. In addition, NAVTA members can receive a free 30 day trial!
- **20%** off FearFree Certification.
- **20%** discount from PetPlan Pet Insurance.
- Discounts with Embrace Pet Insurance.
- **\$5** off David Liss offerings.
- Complimentary membership with VetCheck—the amazingly simply veterinary communications software!
- **50%** discount on annual memberships with TrustedHousesitters.
- Access to **NAVTA Social Link**—allowing networking and engagement with other members!
- Access the **NAVTA Career Center**—allowing you to post resumes and look for jobs across the nation!
- Watch for more **EXCITING** opportunities and benefits to come in 2017!



# SCNAVTA 2016 CHAPTER OF THE YEAR: MURRAY STATE COLLEGE VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM



The student chapter at MSC promotes veterinary technology at every opportunity—whether the opportunity arrives in the form of National Veterinary Technician Week, at a school carnival or during our annual community-wide holiday celebration. The chapter has official co-advisors, but is mentored by all. The staff (one of whom has been with the Murray State College Vet Tech program for over 30 years) works together on a daily basis to promote the national association, the student chapter, the program and the college itself. Students and faculty work closely with one another, and all are committed to community service.

In pursuit of meaningful community service, the student chapter is involved in events and projects throughout the year. Murray State College is located in a small, rural community, and events that are important to the area require many volunteers. The chapter has previously been informed that several events could not/would not have occurred without the chapter's direct leadership and involvement.

Throughout the year, even before classes begin in the fall, the MSC chapter sets up booths at community events. They distribute literature and information at every event and take pride in telling others about the program. Students volunteer at the Oklahoma State Fair Birthing Center where they monitor the parturition of sheep, pigs, goats, and cows while providing information to

visitors. Also held in the spring semester is the club's low-income spay and neuter clinic, which lasts an entire day and is worked solely by students and instructors.

In December the club sponsors the season's most popular and well-attended event. On Santa Night, children are invited to come see Santa and Mrs. Claus—who happen to bring along their pets! The lines are long and every child receives an age-appropriate toy. Last year over 800 gifts were given, along with hot chocolate and cookies. Funds for Santa Night are raised at a luncheon, which allow Santa Night to remain free of charge and open to all.

For this year's National Veterinary Technician Week (NVTW), the club held an Open House for elementary students. Visitors

on the guided tour took in a viewing of live surgery. Following the Open House was the inaugural Veterinary Technician Olympics; a series of games based around the profession's commonly used skills.

The most exciting project for the upcoming year will be filming the documentary "Why Aren't You a Vet?" The film will feature interviews with veterinary technicians who will be asked to answer that common question. The film will premiere during next year's NVTW.

The MSC SCNAVTA regularly makes donations to organizations such as the Oklahoma Wildcare Foundation and the Endangered Ark Foundation. Club members turn out in high numbers for campus blood drives, and they take dogs to visit the local nursing home for monthly animal

therapy sessions. This year the club instituted two new internal programs—a tutoring and leadership program.

### SCNATVA Co-Advisors of the Year:

**Debbie Reed, BS, RVT and  
Laura Pearce-Sandmann,  
BS, RVT**

Ms. Debbie Reed and Ms. Laura Pearce-Sandmann have been in Veterinary Technology education for 29 and 30 years, respectively, at Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. They are the Co-Directors of the Veterinary Technology Program, Co-Sponsors of the Student Chapter of NAVTA and hold the rank of Assistant Professors.

Ms. Reed has been a member of AVTE, NAVTA, OVTA and AEVTA for many years. She served on CVTEA and has held every office of the OVTA. Currently, she is the on-site interactive lab coordinator for Southwest Veterinary Symposium, Past President of OVTA and Murray State College Faculty Assembly Chairman. She serves on numerous institutional committees with Murray State College and is involved in various community groups.

Ms. Pearce-Sandmann has been a member of AVTE, NAVTA, OVTA and AZVT for many years. She has served as President of AVTE and held every office of the OVTA. She serves on many

institutional committees with Murray State College and is involved in various community groups.

Ms. Reed and Ms. Pearce-Sandmann are dedicated to the profession, Murray State College and most importantly their students.

**Congratulations to Murray State College, Laura Sandmann and Debbie Reed (Co-Advisors), and the entire staff of the Veterinary Technology Program. You make our profession proud!**



# KIDNEY DISEASE AND NUTRITION

## YES THEY WILL EAT!



**Vicky Ograin, MBA, RVT, VTS (Nutrition)**  
**Kara M. Burns, MS, MEd, LVT, VTS (Nutrition)**  
**Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians**

**Learning Objective:** Upon completion of reading this article, the participant will be able to describe clinical signs associated with early renal disease and successfully manage the disease through nutritional intervention.

Chronic kidney disease, aka the “silent killer”, affects over one million pets every year. Kidney disease is the second most common cause of death in cats and the third most common cause of death in dogs.<sup>1</sup> The management of kidney disease has evolved with nutrition playing a prominent role in this management. Studies show that dietary therapy should be recommended for cats and dogs with renal insufficiency whenever the serum creatinine values exceed 2.0 mg/dl, so the veterinary healthcare team should no longer wait until the patient becomes uremic.<sup>2</sup>

This program was reviewed and approved by the AAVSB RACE program for 1 hour of continuing education in jurisdictions which recognize AAVSB RACE approval. Please contact the AAVSB RACE program if you have any comments/concerns regarding this program's validity or relevancy to the veterinary profession.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a disease process in which there is a loss of functional renal tissue/kidney damage that has existed for at least three months. CKD is typically a progressive process or reduction in glomerular filtration rate (GFR) by more than 50%. It has been recommended that the duration of at least three months be used as the benchmark for the CKD diagnosis due to the fact that renal compensatory hypertrophy and improvement in renal function may last for up to three months after the acute loss of nephrons.<sup>3</sup>

### Prevalence

The prevalence of CKD has been estimated to be 0.5% to 1.0% in dogs and 1% to 3% in cats<sup>4,5</sup> and increases with age, especially in cats. As many as 30% to 50% of cats 15 years of age or older have CKD.<sup>6,7</sup> Chronic kidney disease is seen most often in older cats, with a median age of nine years being reported. A rise in diagnosed kidney disease has been observed, most likely due to better preventive care resulting in cats living longer. In many cases a cause cannot be determined. The disease is



irreversible, progressive, and carries a poor long term prognosis. However, with long term dietary and medical management the cat's quality and quantity of life can be significantly improved.

### Clinical Signs

Cats and dogs with early stage kidney disease may be asymptomatic. Typically, polyuria (PU) and polydipsia (PD) may be the first indication of CKD in dogs. In cats, PU/PD is often not recognized in early stages of CKD, due to cats' capacity to maintain their urine concentrating ability longer. As the disease progresses this ability is lost, and cat owners begin to notice increased thirst. With disease progression, especially in the International Renal Interest Society (IRIS) stages three and four, pets present with nonspecific signs, including poor body condition, weight loss, decreased appetite, lethargy and dehydration. Other signs that may be seen are nocturia (having to urinate at night), constipation and diarrhea. Cats may become hypertensive and develop acute blindness. The later stages of the disease may lead to seizures or coma.<sup>1,8</sup>

Azotemia is an excess of urea nitrogen and/or creatinine. The first ability that is lost with the failing kidney is often the kidney's ability to concentrate the urine. In a cat, the urine becomes both dilute

and excessive when 66% of the kidney function has been lost. This change will precede the rise of metabolic waste in the blood (urea- creatinine) which occurs only when approximately 75% of the kidneys are lost. Kidney disease involves a loss of functional renal tissue due to a progressive process that is irreversible.<sup>1</sup>

The kidneys are responsible for maintaining fluid balance, regulating electrolyte balance, acid-base balance, and blood pressure, as well as maintaining the correct calcium/phosphorus balance. As kidneys fail, their function becomes impaired and the workload on the kidney is increased. Nutritional management of chronic renal failure is directed at improving kidney function and reducing the workload on the kidney, subsequently slowing the progression of the disease.

### Staging of Chronic Kidney Disease

IRIS has proposed that the terms chronic renal failure and chronic renal insufficiency be replaced by chronic kidney disease (CKD) and that a staging system be used to facilitate the management of feline and canine patients with CKD.<sup>9</sup> This classification scheme is based on a three-step process:

1. Establish a diagnosis of a chronic (greater than three months) disease affecting the kidney.
2. Determine the stage of the disease in a euvolemic pet.
3. Substage the patient based on assessment of proteinuria and blood pressure.

IRIS splits kidney disease into four basic stages according to creatinine levels. Following these four stages are substages of each with respect to proteinuria and the presence of hypertension. IRIS recommends a Urine Protein Creatinine Ratio and a blood pressure measurement to evaluate the cat or dog for these substages.

### A New Kidney Biomarker

Symmetric dimethylarginine (SDMA) is an innovative kidney function test.

SDMA is a methylated form of arginine, an amino acid. Arginine is released into circulation during protein degradation and is excreted by the kidneys. SDMA has three key attributes:

1. a biomarker for kidney function
2. increases earlier than creatinine in dogs and cats with CKD
3. specific for kidney function.

SDMA should be considered complementary to creatinine, and SDMA and creatinine both should be evaluated when assessing kidney function in dogs and cats. The overarching goals of CKD management are to: 1) control clinical signs of uremia, 2) maintain adequate fluid, electrolyte acid-base balance, 3) provide adequate nutrition, and 4) minimize progression of kidney disease.<sup>10-13</sup> Nutritional management plays a role in each goal and is the cornerstone of treatment for pets with CKD.

### Nutritional Management of CKD

When addressing CKD the goals of dietary management are to maximize the quality and quantity of life of the pet by ensuring adequate intake of energy, limiting the extent of uremia, and slowing the rate of progression of the disease.<sup>8,14</sup> Nutritional therapy is aimed at the following:

1. reduce the workload of the kidney and improve kidney function
2. slow ongoing damage to the kidney
3. reduce the accumulation of toxic waste and signs of illness
4. provide highly palatable and optimally balanced nutrition

In an attempt to keep as much of the kidney functioning as possible, it is wise to intervene with nutritional therapy as early as possible. Research has shown that cats fed a maintenance food had a significantly greater number of uremic episodes compared with cats fed a therapeutic renal food. There was a significant reduction in renal-related mortality in cats fed a therapeutic renal food<sup>2</sup> and a significantly longer median survival time compared with cats that continued eating their regular food.<sup>15</sup> Early detection of renal disease and



nutritional intervention can drastically alter the course of chronic kidney disease, thus giving dogs and cats the opportunity to live longer and with a better quality of life.

## Water

Kidney disease causes a progressive decline in urine concentrating ability, and maximal urine osmolality approaches that of plasma (300 mOsm/kg) (i.e., isosthenuria). Patients with CKD should have unlimited access to fresh water for free-choice consumption. If readily consumed by the patient, moist foods are preferred because their consumption generally results in increased total water intake compared with dry food consumption.<sup>8</sup>

## Energy

Endogenous protein catabolism resulting in malnutrition and exacerbation of azotemia will occur in the CKD patient unless sufficient amounts of energy are provided. Thus, prevention of malnutrition through adequate energy and nutrient intake is critical in the management of kidney disease. The maintenance energy requirements are a good starting point to determine the amount of calories required each day. Body weight and body condition score should be performed often to ensure proper energy and nutrient intake. Carbohydrates and fats provide the nonprotein sources of energy in the diet with fat providing approximately twice the energy per gram as compared to carbohydrates. Therefore, fat increases the energy density of the diet, which allows the patient to obtain its nutritional requirements from a

smaller volume of food. Providing a smaller volume of food will help to minimize gastric distention; consequently reducing the incidence of nausea and vomiting.<sup>16</sup>

## Protein

Although there is ongoing discussion about the amount of protein needed to manage CKD in cats and dogs, there is general consensus that avoiding excessive dietary protein intake is indicated to control clinical signs of uremia in dogs and cats with CKD. Uremic signs most often occur in stage four disease but may be observed earlier. Many of the extrarenal clinical and metabolic disturbances associated with uremia are direct results of the accumulated waste products derived from protein catabolism. As mentioned earlier, limiting accumulation of nitrogenous waste products and achieving nitrogen balance through the proportional decrease of protein intake as renal function declines is the goal of managing cats and dogs with chronic renal disease. In regard to determining how much protein to recommend for dogs and cats with CKD, all patients should be monitored for signs of protein insufficiency and nutritional management should be adjusted to maintain ideal body condition. Research shows a controlled protein food increases length and quality of life for dogs and cats with renal failure.<sup>2,17</sup> It is suggested that the protein levels in foods intended for most

patients with CKD is 14 to 20% DMB for dogs and 28 to 35% DMB for cats. As CKD advances, foods with less protein may be needed to control signs of uremia. Additionally, the protein should be highly digestible and of high biologic value.

## Phosphorus

Decreasing the intake of dietary phosphorus in dogs and cats with CKD has been shown to be beneficial in limiting phosphorus retention, hyperphosphatemia, and secondary renal hyperparathyroidism. Additional beneficial effects of limiting dietary phosphorus intake were shown to significantly prolong survival times compared with patients that were fed a higher phosphorus maintenance food.<sup>2,15,17</sup>

## Alkalinizers and buffers

Alkalinizers and buffers help to counteract the CKD patient's predisposition to metabolic acidosis, a common complication of kidney failure. They also help decrease muscle wasting associated with acidosis. Cats and dogs with chronic renal disease develop metabolic acidosis because of the impaired ability of the failing kidneys to excrete the daily net acid load. Plasma bicarbonate, venous blood pH and total CO<sub>2</sub> are commonly decreased in cats and dogs with uremia or end stage chronic renal disease. It is recommended to feed a diet formulated to assist the kidney disease patient with alkalinizing the blood and urine which in turn assists in minimizing acid load.

## Sodium and chloride

Controlled amounts of sodium and chloride help control clinical signs associated with sodium and fluid retention (ascites/edema) and minimizes systemic and renal hypertension (primary). Currently the recommended dietary sodium intake for CKD patients is 0.3% DMB or less for dogs and 0.4% DMB or less for cats. The minimum recommended allowances for chloride for dogs and cats are 1.5 times the recommended sodium levels.<sup>8</sup>

## Potassium

Hypokalemia is frequently a complication of chronic kidney disease. Inadequate potassium intake, acidifying diets, or increased urinary losses are all potential reasons for hypokalemia in CKD patients, as are vomiting and inappetence. The proper maintenance of potassium in the body also helps maintain the quality of life. Loss of potassium leads to functional changes in the kidneys, which include reduced glomerular filtration rate and urine concentrating ability. The recommendation of amounts of potassium in foods for dogs with CKD is 0.4 to 0.8% DMB and for cats 0.7 to 1.2% DMB. Oral supplementation may be indicated in cats with CKD and hypokalemia.<sup>8</sup>

## Omega-3 fatty acids and Antioxidants

The specific dietary fatty acid content of a food may play a role in the progression of CKD by affecting: 1) renal hemodynamics, 2) platelet aggregation, 3) lipid peroxidation, 4) systemic blood pressure, 5) proliferation of glomerular mesangial cells, and 6) plasma lipid concentration. Omega-3 fatty acids (e.g., eicosapentaenoic acid [EPA] and docosahexaenoic acid [DHA]) in foods compete with arachidonic acid to alter eicosanoid production. These alterations are considered to be renoprotective. It is suggested that the range for total omega-3 fatty acid content in foods for canine and feline CKD patients is 0.4 to 2.5% DMB. More research is needed in regard to the omega-6:omega-3 fatty acid ratio. Until then, the recommendation is 1:1 to 7:1 (omega-6:omega-3 fatty acid).<sup>8</sup>

Antioxidants defend cells from free radical oxidation and promote a healthy immune system. Oxidative damage can contribute to the progression of renal disease. Antioxidants with omega-3 fatty acids reduce renal oxidant injury. Dietary omega-3 fatty acid supplementation combined with antioxidants can further reduce renal oxidant injury.

## B Vitamins

B vitamins help compensate for urinary losses due to kidney disease. B-vitamin deficiency can be caused by decreased appetite, vomiting, diarrhea and polyuria. Anorexia associated with renal failure may be exacerbated by thiamin and niacin deficiency.

## Soluble Fiber

Growth of bacteria is dependent upon a source of nitrogen. Even though dietary protein provides some nitrogen, blood urea is the largest and most available source of nitrogen for bacterial protein synthesis in the colon. Soluble fiber encourages growth of beneficial bacteria in the colon. Urea is the major end product of protein catabolism in mammals. When blood urea diffuses into the large bowel it is broken down by bacterial ureases and used for protein synthesis. The bacterial protein is then excreted in the feces.

## Transition

Transitioning to a therapeutic food can be a stressful experience for the healthcare team, the owner and the patient. Assisting pet owners will help with the success of the transition as well as the treatment of the pet. Veterinary technicians play a vital role in ensuring a smooth transition to the recommended food. A transition can and should take as long as needed—seven days, three to four weeks or longer—the important point to remember is that the patient needs to be on the food long term, so it is fine to take a little longer to transition. For most pets, a seven day transition is recommended. Start on day one feeding 75% of the original food with 25% of the new food. Feed this amount for 1–2 days. If there are any gastrointestinal issues, do not continue with the transition until the signs stop. If the signs continue, the veterinary team will need to assess the transition. If everything is going well and the pet is accepting the new food, continue with 50% of the old diet and 50% of the new diet. Continue for 1–2 days and then finish with 25% of the old diet and 75% of the new diet for 1–2 days. On the seventh day feed 100% of the new diet. It is important

for the team to remember some pets will take longer to transition. Encourage the owner to continue with the transition, as the recommended nutrition is key in the medical management of the pet.

## Palatability

If a pet is not accepting the new food, it is perfectly acceptable to recommend palatability enhancers such as: 1) warming the food 2) adding low-sodium chicken broth or 3) adding tuna juice (tuna in water only) or clam broth. Due to the concern of concurrent hypertension, low salt options are recommended. Garlic is not recommended, as it has been shown to cause anemia. For cats and brachycephalic dogs, feeding in a wide bowl or flat dish to prevent the whiskers from touching the side of the bowl is advised. Putting the new food and the original food in side by side dishes is another tip to get picky patients to eat.

## Texture Issues

Cats and dogs are very sensitive to food—the form, the odor and the taste. The flavor and texture preferences of individual cats are often influenced by early experience that can affect preferences throughout life. Cats familiar with a certain texture or type of food (i.e., moist, dry, semi-moist) may refuse foods with different textures. Cats do have a preference for certain ‘flavors’ such as animal fat, protein hydrolysates (digests), meat extracts, and certain free amino acids found in animal muscle (i.e., alanine, proline, lysine, histidine and leucine). Food temperature also plays a role in acceptance of the food by the cat. When feeding canned/moist foods, the preference is for the moist food to be at, or near, body temperature (38.5°C [101.5°F]). These factors are critical to the proper nutrition of a cat, especially if seriously ill.<sup>18</sup>

## Taste Aversion

Dogs and Cats can also develop a learned taste aversion. Taste aversions occur when the food is associated with a negative experience. It is important to not feed a hospitalized patient the recommended food while in the hospital. When home, the

pet may associate the smells of the food fed in the hospital with the experience in the hospital, and be reluctant or refuse to eat it. This is especially true of CKD patients. It is recommended to avoid feeding a kidney disease patient with the recommended therapeutic food in the midst of a uremic crisis. The smorgasbord approach where all the available commercial therapeutic foods are given to the pet to see which they like best should be avoided.<sup>19</sup>

## Follow Up

The final key to success is providing encouragement and support to the pet owner. Call the owner 2–3 days after starting the food to ensure the transition is going well and to answer any questions the owner may have. Call again at two weeks; hopefully the transition is complete, but if it is not, this is a good time to encourage the pet owner to have patience and to provide an opportunity for questions. Call at two months to check in and see how things are going. These calls are a good time to remind pet owners of their next appointment and see if they need any more food or medications. Continue regular calls after the initial start of the food to ensure the cat is doing well on the food, at least every 3–6 months.

## Features of Therapeutic Renal Foods

Overall, renal therapeutic foods are formulated to avoid excessive protein, phosphorus, and sodium (relative to maintenance pet foods). Other features of renal foods include increased buffering capacity to help combat metabolic acidosis and additional potassium because of the tendency toward hypokalemia in cats with CKD. Some foods contain antioxidants (vitamins E and C and β-carotene) to minimize oxidative stress, which may contribute to progression of CKD.<sup>20–21</sup> Many foods formulated to manage renal disease also contain increased amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, which have been shown to improve renal function and decrease mortality in dogs with kidney disease.<sup>22</sup>

Many healthcare team members have an incorrect perception that renal foods are

deficient in protein; however, these foods contain more than adequate amounts of nutrients to maintain body condition of adult dogs and cats. When discussing therapeutic renal foods, it may help for team members to avoid using words like “protein-restricted” because pet owners may interpret this to mean deficient or inadequate. Therapeutic renal foods do contain less protein than typical maintenance foods; however, they also have other nutrient differences (as noted above) that contribute to their beneficial effects in managing patients with kidney disease.

## Summary

Nutritional management is the single most effective treatment for CKD in cats.<sup>23</sup> Early detection of renal disease and nutritional intervention can drastically alter the course of chronic kidney disease. As a result this gives cats the opportunity to live longer and with a better quality of life.

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## Kara M. Burns, MS, MEd, LVT, VTS (Nutrition), VTS-H (Internal Medicine, Dentistry)

Kara Burns is a licensed veterinary technician originally from New England, now living in Kansas. She holds a master's degree in physiology and a master's degree in counseling psychology. She began her career in human medicine working as an emergency psychologist in the Maine Medical Center emergency department. She also worked at Maine Poison Control as a poison specialist dealing with human and animal poisonings. She then made the move to veterinary medicine and worked in small animal private practice and a small animal and avian practice in Maine.

Kara is the Founder and President of the Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians, the tenth recognized specialty for veterinary technicians and has attained her VTS (Nutrition). She teaches nutrition courses around the world on the VIN/Veterinary Support Personnel Network and on VetMedTeam. She also is a contributor to Lafebervet.com. Kara also works as an independent nutritional consultant.

She is a member of many national, international, and state associations and holds positions on many boards in the profession; AAVN executive board technician liaison; the NAVTA Journal editor in chief; NAVTA Communications Director; Veterinary Team Brief Advisory Board; VSPN Nutrition Board Moderator; International Society for Sports Nutrition; and is the president of the Kansas Veterinary Technician Association, to name a few.

She has authored many articles, textbooks, and textbook chapters and is an internationally invited speaker, focusing on topics of nutrition, leadership, and technician utilization.

Ms. Burns has been featured on the cover of the *Veterinary Technician Journal* and the *NAVTA Journal*. She was named the 2013 North American Veterinary Conference Technician Speaker of the Year. She was granted an honorary VTS (Internal Medicine) in 2011. She was also granted an honorary VTS (Dentistry) in 2012. She is the 2010 NAVTA Veterinary Technician of the Year, as well as the 2011 Dr. Franklin Loew Lecturer. Kara has also been named the National Association of Professional Women 'Woman of the Year' for 2010-2011 and the Cambridge Who's Who in Professionals V.I.P. for 2010-2011. She was accepted into the International Women's Leadership Association in 2012.

She enjoys spending time with her wife Dr. Ellen Lowery and their children. They are actively involved in coaching youth sports, 4-H, school activities, and church ministry. The family also includes two horses, two sheep, a pug, a French bulldog, 5 birds, 4 indoor cats (one of which is three legged), a guinea pig, a blue-tongue skink, and a bearded dragon!

## Vicky Ograin MBA, RVT, VTS (Nutrition)

Vicky received her technician degree in 1983. She served in private practice for 16 years in California, and then 15 years ago began a new career with Hill's Pet Nutrition. In 2007, she completed a Bachelor of Science and in 2008, she completed a Masters in 2008, both in Business Administration.

Vicky obtained her Veterinary Technician Specialty (VTS) in nutrition in June 2013 and serves as secretary for the Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians. She is also the Secretary/Treasurer for the Kansas Veterinary Technician Association. She is a life member of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA), and was the 2014 president of NAVTA. Vicky was the past-president of NAVTA in 2015 and continues to serve as the past-president of NAVTA for 2016

Vicky speaks national and internationally and is a published author.

# PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE

## OWN IT!

Rebecca Rose, CVT

Definition of a professional: Adjective; businesslike, conforming to the standards of skill, competence, or character normally expected of a properly qualified and experienced person in a work environment.

Definition of a professional: Noun; somebody whose occupation requires extensive education or specialized training. A worker in a paid occupation that usually requires a high degree of training or skill or competency.

### *What is your definition of a professional?*

When I envision a professional, I see someone who is self-confident, knowledgeable, well-groomed, respected by their peers, courteous, unlikely to gossip (or at least redirects the conversation when gossip becomes the topic), goal oriented, and willing to admit their mistakes (gracefully).

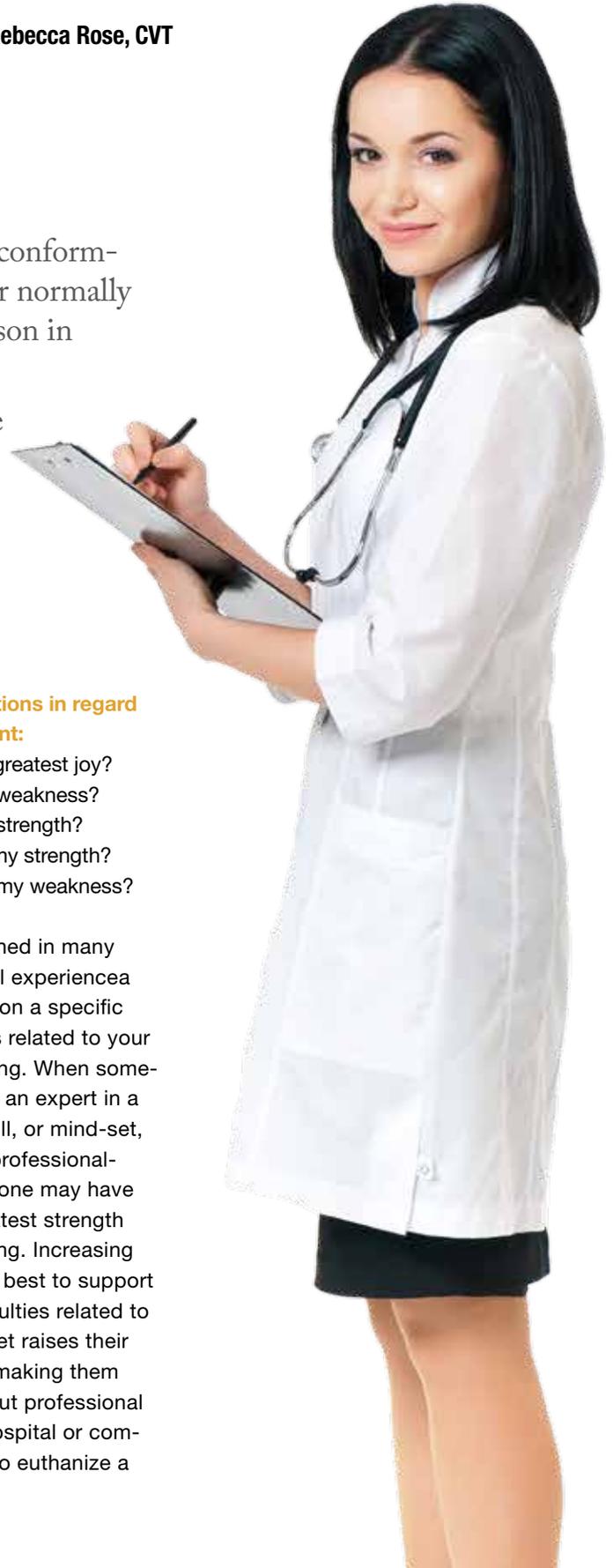
How does anyone do all of that, all of the time? It is a conscious choice someone must make every day, in every moment. A professional is aware of their surroundings, clued into the folks around them and committed to creating a positive, professional presence at all times.

**Self-confidence** is a result of knowing who you are. That sounds a bit cliché; however, it is the foundation of all successful, professional individuals. “Know thyself” is more difficult than one initially imagines. Understanding your own limitations, weaknesses, “Achilles’ heel,” strengths, interests and passions will enhance your self-confidence.

### Answer these few questions in regard to your work environment:

1. What brings me the greatest joy?
2. What is my greatest weakness?
3. What is my greatest strength?
4. How can I enhance my strength?
5. How can I decrease my weakness?

**Knowledge** can be learned in many ways, including personal experience, book learning, focusing on a specific topic, mastering of skills related to your workplace and networking. When someone chooses to become an expert in a particular procedure, skill, or mind-set, then they expand their professionalism. For example, someone may have answered that their greatest strength may be in grief counseling. Increasing their knowledge on how best to support a family during the difficulties related to euthanizing a beloved pet raises their level of understanding, making them an asset and a sought out professional within their veterinary hospital or community. Having chosen to euthanize a



beloved pet in the past allows the technician to truly empathize with the family and further endears the family to the technician's support. Networking with other veterinary professionals who offer specialty services in euthanasia will also increase knowledge.

**Answer these questions in regard to your greatest strength and how you can learn more:**

1. What can I do to learn more about my strength?
2. What class can I take to learn more about my strength?
3. What mentor can I contact to learn more about my strength?

Being **well groomed** is important. In Peggy Klaus' book, *The Hard Truths About Soft Skills*, she has dedicated an entire sub-chapter titled "*Books are judged by their covers and the same is true for you.*" We are judged by our appearance. Is it the right thing to do, to judge outward appearances? Of course not; however, it happens! Every moment of every day provides an opportunity to make a first impression. That impression will be made by body posture, eye contact, attire, personal hygiene, and your smile. You may be saying to yourself, "*I wear scrubs all day long because that is the attire of a veterinary technician.*" I cannot argue with that; however, clean scrubs are more professional than stained scrubs. Personal hygiene is determined every morning before you walk out the door. Who says you cannot wear a nice set of studded earrings or a classy necklace? Posture, standing tall, smiling, and a firm handshake speak volumes when meeting a new client or sales representative.

Years ago, a percentage of technicians attending continuing educational classes wore scrubs to those events. Now, when I give presentations, the majority of technicians and students are wearing appropriate attire and nice accessories, are well groomed and their appearance is professional! They are making great first impressions.

**A few questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do I look as professional as I feel?
2. What can I do to appear more professional?
3. What change do I intend to make next week at work that will enhance my professional attitude?

**Professionals are respected by their peers.**

Colleagues support their peers who are making a difference, taking steps to increase their knowledge, belonging to professional organizations, and taking calculated risks. Individuals who network outside of their comfort zone will expand their circle of influence and are being proactive. Steve Covey writes in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, "*There are some people who interpret 'proactive' to mean pushy, aggressive, or insensitive; but that isn't the case at all. Proactive people aren't pushy. They are smart, value driven and know what is needed.*" Proactive people are generally respected by their peers, lead by example, make a difference in their profession, and exude professionalism.

**Questions to ask yourself regarding respect:**

1. How do I show respect to my peers?
2. Amongst my peers, who do I respect most? Why?
3. How do my peers show me respect?
4. What am I doing to enhance the veterinary profession?

**Being courteous speaks volumes.**

Saying "*Thank you,*" "*I apologize*" and "*You are welcome*" are courteous and the right thing to do. Add a bit of true sincerity, and you have shown professionalism in its simplest form. For example, in a veterinary hospital, assisting an elderly pet owner by walking their dog to the car is courteous. When a client gives you a compliment, respond with, "*Thank you*". Shrugging or no response at all is rude. When a sales representative praises you for the increase in revenue, say, "*You are welcome.*" This may seem petty and trite; however, consider the number of times in a day that you

miss the opportunity to provide a courteous response.

1. How many times this past week did I assist a client above and beyond "the call of duty?"
2. What simple courtesy have I denied a fellow co-worker?
3. What simple courtesy have I shown a fellow co-worker?
4. Beginning next week, how will I be more courteous?

**Gossip** is unprofessional; choosing to redirect a conversation that is full of hearsay shows professionalism. How often have you caught yourself in the middle of a trashy conversation and you chose to redirect it? Gossip, especially malicious conversation, is rude and unproductive.

**Self-assessment of engaging in gossip:**

1. How often do I engage in unproductive conversation about someone else?
2. How often do I redirect gossip?
3. How can I improve creating informative, constructive conversations?
4. Next week, what will I do when I find myself engaged in gossip?

**Goal oriented** professionals achieve more. Success looks different for everyone; however, individuals who write out goals, identify projects, create a weekly plan and share their visions will manifest their dreams and goals. Effective self management includes both the big picture and details. When you say you are able to do something, you add it to your goals, generate a timeline, and then accomplish the goal. Follow through shows professionalism. Achieving goals, either personal or work related, creates trust. When you hold yourself accountable and follow through on your own dreams, goals, and projects, you lead by an example.

Regarding weekly planning and self management, Steve Covey states: "*It helps you to create balance in your life. It helps you rise above the limitations of daily planning and organize and schedule in the context*

*of the week. And when a higher value conflicts with what you have planned, it empowers you to use your self-awareness and your conscience to maintain integrity to the principles and purposes you have determined are most important. Instead of using a road map, you're using a compass."*

### Questions to ask yourself about follow-through and goals:

1. What professional goals have I set for myself in 2017?
2. What goals did I complete in 2016?
3. How often do I set goals, projects, and dreams and achieve them?
4. How often have I let a co-worker down by not following through on a project?

**Admitting mistakes** is professional. We are all human and we all make mistakes. However, it shows great integrity and trustworthiness to admit the mistakes. When an error occurs, acknowledge the mistake, make corrections, apologize, readjust, and keep moving forward. Within the veterinary medical profession, our mistakes can mean life or death for a patient. This is serious business, and we are committed to accuracy. When an accident occurs, and they will, it is professional to bring the error to light. This is easier than it sounds and oftentimes mistakes are not discovered until after the fact. We all have stories of tragedy and mistakes. You may recall an instance in which you were a part of the problem; however recall instances in which you were part of the solution, too. Problem solving is just as important as admitting your mistakes.

1. What mistake have I confessed to?
2. What mistake have I yet to confess to?
3. How do I deal with my mistakes?
4. How do I support co-workers when they have made a mistake?

Let's get real, we all make mistakes and we all need to treat each other with respect.

**Each and every person has the potential to be a professional. Within the veterinary community ample opportunities are available to be self-confident, knowledgeable, well-groomed, respected by your peers, courteous, conscious of gossip, goal-oriented and aware of your mistakes.**

### What is stopping you from being a professional?

### What are you going to do next week to increase your professional character?

## RESOURCES:

Klaus Peggy, *The Hard Truth About Soft Skills*, workplace lessons smart people wished they had learned sooner. HarperCollins Publishers: 2007

Covey Stephen R, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, powerful lessons in personal change. Free Press: 1989 [www.stephencovey.com](http://www.stephencovey.com)

Ball James R, *Professionalism is for Everyone- five keys to being a true professional*. The Goals Institute: 2007 [www.goalpower.com](http://www.goalpower.com)

Phillips Paige, RVT, *The Secret to a Happy Work Life*, Firstline, September 2009. DVM360.com. <http://license.icopyright.net/user/viewFreeUse.act?fuid=MTAxNTAONzE%3D>





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<sup>1</sup>Pereira GG, Fragoso S, Pires E. Effect of dietary intake of L-tryptophan supplementation on multi-housed cats presenting stress related behaviours, in *Proceedings: BSAVA* 2010.

<sup>2</sup>Beata C, Beaumont-Graff E, Coll V, et al. Effect of alpha-casozepine (Zylkene) on anxiety in cats. *J Vet Behav*. 2007;2(2):40-46.

<sup>3</sup>Kruger JM, Lulich JP, MacLeay J, et al. Comparisons of foods with differing nutritional profiles for long-term management of acute nonobstructive idiopathic cystitis in cats. *J Am Vet Med Assoc*. 2015;247(5):508-517.

<sup>4</sup>Lulich JP, Kruger JM, MacLeay JM, et al. Efficacy of two commercially available, low-magnesium, urine-acidifying dry foods for the dissolution of struvite uroliths in cats. *J Am Vet Med Assoc*. 2013;243(8):1147-1153. Average 27 days *in vivo* study in urolith forming cats.

*J Am Vet Med Assoc*. 2013;243(8):1147-1153. Average 27 days *in vivo* study in urolith forming cats.

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# BRIEF MEDIA & MISSION RABIES **CONTINUE PURSUIT** **TO END RABIES**

PARTNERSHIP ENTERS SECOND YEAR, AIMS TO SAVE HUMAN & ANIMAL LIVES WORLDWIDE

**TULSA, OKLAHOMA—Brief Media—publisher of leading veterinary publication and reference brands *Clinician's Brief*, *Veterinary Team Brief*, *Plumb's Therapeutics Brief*, and *Plumb's Veterinary Drugs*—has renewed its volunteer partnership with Mission Rabies ([missionrabies.com](http://missionrabies.com)) for a second year.**

In the continued effort to eliminate rabies and increase awareness, Brief Media will collaborate with Mission Rabies and other volunteer sponsors to send veterinary professionals on a second trip to Malawi for 1 of 2 Mega Vaccine Drives: the first drive is scheduled for April 15 to April 29, 2017, and the second for May 6 to May 20, 2017.

While in Malawi, volunteers will administer rabies vaccinations at static clinics; walk door-to-door to deliver free vaccinations; educate communities about the danger of rabies; and deliver lessons on responsible dog ownership, dog bite prevention, and dog bite first aid treatment.

“Mission Rabies is really excited about working with Brief Media to enable volunteers from all around the world to join our rabies project in Blantyre, Malawi,” says Frederic Lohr, global operations officer for Mission Rabies. “We had a fantastic start of our partnership last year, and Mission Rabies is looking forward to our work together in the future.”

Brief Media began its partnership with Mission Rabies—a UK-based, nonprofit organization—in 2015 with the goal to create a better veterinary world, one in which rabies is eliminated by 2030. In April and May of 2016, Brief Media and Mission Rabies sent several volunteers to vaccinate dogs in Blantyre, Malawi, where one hospital records the highest incidence of child rabies deaths of any institution in Africa. In just 2 weeks, volunteers vaccinated more than 19 000 dogs and provided rabies education to 60 000 children.

With this renewed partnership, Brief Media will continue leveraging the knowledge and skills of the veterinary community

to promote animal and human health in a humanitarian capacity.

“Partnering with Mission Rabies to collaboratively save pet and human lives is an essential project in our mission to create a better veterinary world,” says Elizabeth Green, Brief Media CEO and founder.

For more information, or to volunteer for the Mega Vaccine Drive, contact Jessie Foley ([volunteers@briefmedia.com](mailto:volunteers@briefmedia.com)).

### About Mission Rabies

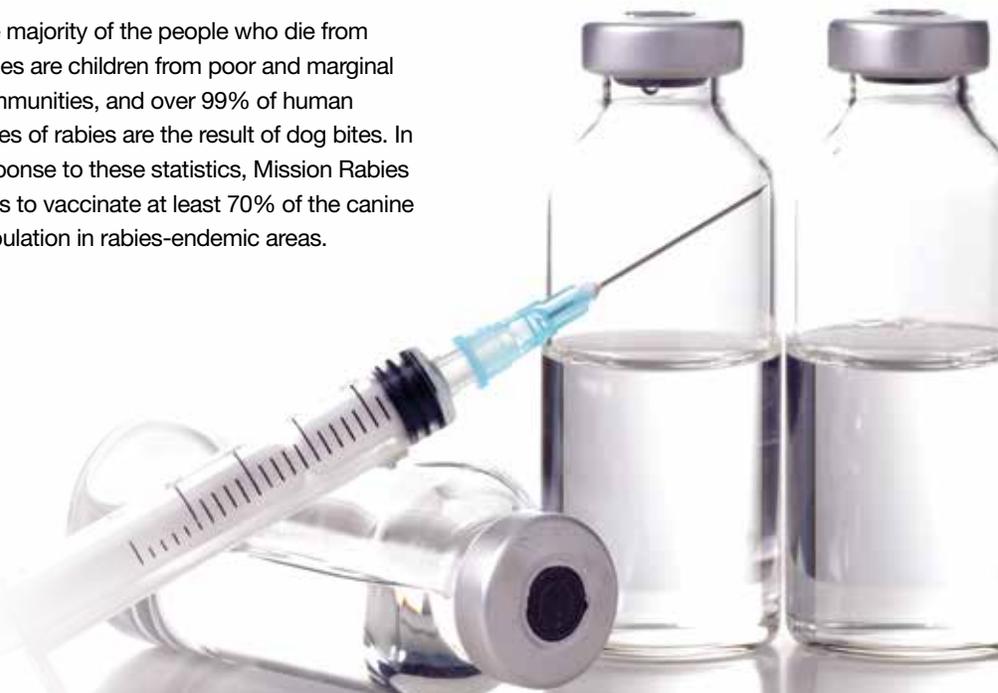
Having witnessed the devastating effect of rabies firsthand, Luke Gamble, CEO of the UK-based charity Worldwide Veterinary Service (WVS), launched Mission Rabies in September 2013. Since then, Mission Rabies, with the help of local and international volunteers, has vaccinated more than 380 000 dogs, educated more than 622 000 children on rabies risk reduction, and trained more than 70 Indian veterinarians in humane Animal Birth Control (ABC) techniques.

The majority of the people who die from rabies are children from poor and marginal communities, and over 99% of human cases of rabies are the result of dog bites. In response to these statistics, Mission Rabies aims to vaccinate at least 70% of the canine population in rabies-endemic areas.

The campaign is led by local animal welfare charities in the project countries. The support team in the UK is led by Luke Gamble, with Dogs Trust and MSD Animal Health as the key international sponsors.

### About Brief Media

Brief Media is a trusted provider of educational information and point-of-care tools for small animal veterinary practitioners and their teams, and a valued resource for veterinary marketers. The Brief trio of peer-reviewed publications—*Clinician's Brief*, *Veterinary Team Brief*, and *Plumb's Therapeutics Brief*—offers readers an in-the-trenches perspective on small animal clinical topics, communication and leadership, and pharmacology with a steadfast focus on practical, real-world applications. The company's latest endeavor—Plumb's Veterinary Drugs—is the official online version of Plumb's. With its rapid, nimble search capabilities and easy-to-use format (optimized for smartphones, tablets, or computers), Plumb's Veterinary Drugs helps veterinarians quickly find the drug information they need, making this a must-have resource for all veterinary professionals.





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<sup>†</sup> Only dry contains E.A.T.™ Technology.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO)

<sup>2</sup> Hill's® Prescription Diet® k/d® with chicken dry vs. Royal Canin Veterinary Diet® Renal Support A, F and S. Data on file.

<sup>3</sup> Ross S.J, Osborne CA, Kirk CA, et al. Clinical evaluation of dietary modification for treatment of spontaneous chronic kidney disease in cats. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 2006;229(6):949-957.

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