



AKVMA  
T | 907.205.4272  
E | info@akvma.org

January 17, 2024

Alaska Board of Veterinary Examiners  
PO Box 110806  
Juneau, AK 99811-0806

**Re: On the Job Training for Veterinary Technicians**

Dear Alaska Board of Veterinary Examiners,

The Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association (AKVMA) is aware that the Board of Veterinary Examiners will be meeting February 1, and it is our hope this letter can be shared during the “public comment” time as it’s uncertain that anyone from AKVMA can be available to provide comments.

AKVMA has read with great interest that BOVE will be discussing the very important topic of how work experience may be phasing out nationally as a pathway to veterinary technicians. While we understand the concept to eliminate the work experience pathway as a laudable goal for the veterinary technician profession, we have grave concerns with phasing out the “on the job training” route in qualifying to take the Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE) currently. Our concern stems from the fact that Alaska simply doesn’t have the infrastructure in place yet to provide a pool of veterinary technicians from an accredited AVMA veterinary technician program. While there are efforts in Alaska to move forward with a veterinary technician associate program in the fall of 2024, it won’t be until December 2026 before there are veterinary technicians completing the program.

The Mat-Su College/UAA Veterinary Technician program is currently funded to enroll only 16 students every 2 years. The program will also have to demonstrate success both to the University Board of Regents and to the AVMA accreditors. Adding to the uncertainty, the long-term viability of this program has yet to be proven. In addition to becoming accredited, there must be an ongoing supply of interested students sufficient not only to continue the program, but to hopefully expand it to ensure its financial stability for the University.

Considering that the Mat-Su/UAA veterinary technician program is starting the fall of 2024 and that it must achieve certain indicators of success, our opinion is that it is premature to move away from the “on the job training” pathway. Eventually, Alaska should move away from the “on the job training” pathway but until there are more options than online schools, Alaska needs to preserve that route. This is especially important with a high attrition rate from the veterinary technician profession and a high demand for veterinary technicians in the workforce. Any efforts to phasing

out the “on the job training” need to be carefully orchestrated to assure that Alaska veterinarians have a solid pipeline for producing qualified veterinary technicians to help meet the workforce needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments concerning this issue. AKVMA appreciates the diligence and great work that has been put forth by the Board of Veterinary Examiners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vanessa Serratore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Vanessa Serratore  
AKVMA President