

From: AAVSB
To: [Stephen Boese](#)
Subject: AAVSB President's Message Regarding Colorado's Proposition 129 and VPAs
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

All of us have navigated through our personal and professional lives, facing and dealing with significant issues and concerns. In the veterinary regulatory world, many of us confront such issues on a daily basis. When addressing these matters, we always view them through the lens of “public protection”. After all, that is why we do what we do as Regulators.

During the November 2024 election, Proposition 129 passed in Colorado and created a new position to perform veterinary care, the veterinary professional associate (VPA). The new position will be regulated by the Colorado State Board of Veterinary Medicine, which also regulates other veterinary positions such as veterinary technicians, veterinary technician specialists, and doctors of veterinary medicine. The proposition outlines the minimum education and qualifications needed to become a VPA.

Prior to the November 2024 election, the 2024 AAVSB Veterinary Team Survey indicated that only 38% of respondents believed there is a need for the new role of an advanced animal healthcare provider. In light of this resounding response, the AAVSB ceased any effort to advance the development of a midlevel veterinary practitioner.

Despite the fact that the veterinary community did not see the need for a midlevel practitioner at this time, the majority of the voting population of Colorado thought otherwise. There are as many opinions on this subject as there are people to provide them. The Board of Directors of the AAVSB is no different. Our Board discussions on this subject left us all with different opinions! In essence, there was no clear path forward with regard to a midlevel veterinary practitioner.

Once Proposition 129 passed, the focus of the Board of Directors shifted

from “Do we support a mid-level practitioner?” to “How best can we protect the public and ensure that the VPAs are adequately trained, knowledgeable, and qualified to offer the level of veterinary care outlined in Proposition 129?” Our focus pivoted to one of protecting the public and their pets. At the end of the day, the Board of Directors agreed to undertake several responsibilities around the VPA, including:

1. Education

- **Model Regulations:** Develop model regulations and add them onto the Practice Act Model (PAM).
- **Guidance for Member Boards:** Provide an outline detailing what Member Boards need to prepare for.
- **Public Resources:** Create materials to educate the public about the Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA).
- **Standards Clarification:** Clearly define the standards for the Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA) role.
- **Trusted Expertise:** Leverage our status as trusted experts to provide guidance and support.
- **Collaborative Connections:** Work with the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) and the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA COE) to compare the Colorado State University (CSU) program to other veterinary schools and develop a task list.
- **Legislative Education:** Offer legislative education to Member Boards upon request.
- **Industry Education:** Share insights on how other Member Boards are managing similar initiatives. This approach lays the groundwork by equipping our Member Boards with the tools and information they need while reinforcing the AAVSB’s role as the trusted expert in the field.

2. Examination Development

- **National Examination Creation:** Develop a National Examination for the Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA) role.
- **Comprehensive Support for Member Boards:** Go beyond outlining guidance by providing fully developed materials, including but not limited to:

- Educational resources
- Job analysis documentation
- Any other preparatory tools

3. Credentialing

- Credentialing Model: Establish a comprehensive credentialing model or program for Veterinary Professional Associates (VPAs).
 - Promotes uniformity across Member Boards, ensuring consistent requirements and regulations.
- Uniform Standards: Serves as a universal prerequisite for Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA) licensure, ensuring consistency and standardization across jurisdictions.
 - Eases the administrative burden on Member Boards by providing consistent information for determining licensure.
 - Eases mobility for Veterinary Professional Associates (VPAs) between jurisdictions.
- Education Oversight: Participate in accreditation for school eligibility for the Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA) profession, ensuring quality and consistency across educational programs.
- Specialized Certifications: Introduce specialized certifications for Small Animal Veterinary Professional Associates (VPAs) and Large Animal Veterinary Professional Associates (VPAs), creating specialized pathways within the profession. This level offers a forward-thinking, unified, and proactive approach to Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA) credentialing, setting a new standard for the profession.

The AAVSB is qualified to move forward in this direction. The AAVSB currently owns and produces the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE), which is a similar examination to the one required by the Colorado statute. The AAVSB is also the only organization that produces a qualification examination in veterinary medicine for a small volume of candidates. The QSE exam for the AAVSB's PAVE program tests less than 200 candidates per year.

In closing, the VPA is on the Agenda during the ED/Registrars Summit in Kansas City on March 26-27, 2025, and I look forward to meeting you in person and having conversations about the VPA at that time.

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