



Maximizing the Role of Registered Veterinary Technicians in Team-Based Care

During RVT Month, we celebrate the remarkable contributions of Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs) to the veterinary healthcare team. It's also an opportunity to highlight how RVTs can excel within a collaborative team-based care model. If you're seeking to enhance job satisfaction and unlock the true potential of your RVTs, it's time to harness their capabilities more effectively.

RVTs have undergone rigorous training through an OAVT-accredited veterinary technician/technology college education program. They graduate equipped with the technical skills and competencies necessary to provide care to animals, including conducting wellness appointments, administering vaccinations and providing nutrition consultations. Additional training is not required, but there are some important considerations to maximize the role of the RVT.

Veterinarians can delegate tasks to RVTs when a valid Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) exists and the task is conducted under immediate, direct, or indirect supervision¹. RVTs should only accept delegation at a level of supervision where they can competently and safely perform the task. A veterinarian cannot delegate the acts of diagnosis, prognosis, prescribing or performing surgery.

Type of Supervision	Definition	Example*
Immediate	The veterinarian is on the same premises as the RVT and can see and hear the RVT perform the task.	An RVT implants a microchip during a sponsored microchip clinic.
Direct	The veterinarian is on the same premises as the RVT but cannot see or hear the RVT perform the task.	An RVT gives a patient their annual vaccines, including the rabies vaccine.
Indirect	The veterinarian is not on the same premises as the RVT while the task is being performed. The veterinarian communicates appropriately with the RVT before and after the RVT performs the task and is accessible to the RVT promptly and appropriately while the task is being performed.	An RVT completes preventative herd health checks on a dairy farm and communicates their findings once complete.

**These are only a few possible tasks and scenarios; read the CVO practice standards in the resource section below for more information.*

In fact, many RVTs have been conducting wellness appointments for years. Embracing a team-based care approach enhances patient care, boosts clinic efficiency and revenue, and helps address access to care challenges. A 2019 study by ACER Consulting found that clinics frequently utilizing RVTs for tasks within their core competencies reported higher annual revenues per veterinarian². Conversely, clinics relying heavily on non-RVTs for these tasks experienced lower annual revenues.

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Additionally, RVTs hold their own Professional Liability Insurance (PLI), which covers actual or alleged injuries, negligent acts, errors, or omissions stemming from the provision or failure to provide their professional services as registered veterinary technicians. This coverage, included in OAVT membership, offers up to \$2 million in comprehensive protection.

Registered Veterinary Technicians are highly skilled professionals with diverse technical abilities. Leveraging their expertise efficiently can lead to improved patient care, heightened clinic efficiency, and increased revenue. Embracing a team-based care approach benefits the clinic and upholds a higher standard of care for our animal companions. Consider taking these steps with your team today to improve your clinic's workflow and revenue potential.

Steps to Implement a Team-Based Model:

- 1. Engage your Team:** Initiate a comprehensive plan discussion with your team and incorporate their feedback. Their insights are invaluable! Consider asking your client services team how they would implement appointment scheduling, and asking RVTs which tasks they would be comfortable with under direct and indirect supervision.
- 2. Draft Standard Operating Procedures:** RVTs are required to complete a Professionalism and Ethics workshop as part of the registration process, which includes the creation of Standard Operating Procedures. Ensure that SOPs are formulated and adhered to diligently.
- 3. Client Communication:** Keep your clients informed. Invite them to be a part of this transformative journey.

Future Enhancements

Proposed amendments to the Veterinarian's Act are poised to further empower RVTs to work to the full scope of their abilities. These changes will grant RVTs greater independence by legally authorizing them to initiate and execute medical tasks such as placing an IV catheter for emergency or therapeutic purposes³. By acknowledging RVTs as professionals with a defined scope of practice, the Act will fortify the team-based medicine model and enable RVTs to utilize their technical skills more effectively.

By working to their full potential, now and even more so under a modernized Veterinarian's Act, RVTs serve as critically important contributors to their workplaces. The OAVT encourages you to ensure your workplace takes the steps necessary to implement a collaborative team-based care model for veterinary healthcare fully.

References

1. "Professional Practice Standard: Delegation." College of Veterinarians of Ontario - College of Veterinarians of Ontario, www.cvo.org/standards/delegation. Accessed 22 Sept. 2023.
2. "The Value of an RVT." OAVT, oavt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RVTValueWeb.pdf. Accessed 22 Sept. 2023.
3. "A Proposal to Modernize the Veterinarians Act." Government of Ontario, <https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=43867&language=en>



Resources

CVO Practice Standards and Policy Statements

- [Delegation](#)
- [Informed Client Consent](#)
- [Veterinary Dentistry](#)
- [Rabies](#)
- [Veterinary Euthanasia](#)
- [Forms of Energy Policy Statement](#)
- [Microchip Clinic Policy Statement](#)

Additional Team Model Research:

- [The Value of an RVT- OAVT](#)
- [Pet owners' and veterinarians' perceptions of information exchange and clinical decision-making in companion animal practice - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)
- [Evaluation of team effectiveness and personal empathy for associations with professional quality of life and job satisfaction in companion animal practice personnel - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)
- [The role of veterinary team effectiveness in job satisfaction and burnout in companion animal veterinary clinics - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

SOP Template