

RETAINING RVTs

BY OFFERING THEM OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

BY AMBER GREGG

As the Executive Director of the BC Veterinary Technologists Association (BCVTA), I am often responsible for providing support for our members, the hard-working Registered Veterinary Technologists (RVTs) of BC. I receive requests for advice from our members every day on how to navigate discussions with their clinic owners, practice managers, and veterinary co-workers when it comes to protocols, policies, and procedures in their practices. Questions and concerns often include patient safety and outcomes, utilization of skills, compensation packages, and personal safety. I can tell you with absolute certainty that these members are seeking support because they are often torn between wanting to be a good team member by not “causing trouble” and advocating for patients, clients, and their own personal safety and well-being.

Recognizing the value of RVTs in the veterinary field and fully utilizing their skills can help alleviate veterinarians’ heavy workloads. The Veterinarian’s Act and College of Veterinarians of BC (CVBC) bylaws allow veterinarians to delegate a range of tasks to RVTs. According to the BCVTA’s 2022 Employment and Wage Survey, nearly 100% of respondents have additional certifications and credentials including Veterinary Technician Specialties, Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner, and Veterinary Practice Management Certificate. It is clear that most RVTs

are not satisfied with careers where they are restricted to performing the same old daily tasks and procedures, and often pursue continuing their education beyond what is required to maintain their membership. Does this mean that RVTs are not satisfied with their career choice? Absolutely not! Does it mean that they are looking to get out of veterinary medicine? Again, absolutely not! It means that RVTs want to pursue opportunities that allow them to apply all of their knowledge and skills and grow within the profession.

As a veterinarian, practice manager, or practice owner, you can support your RVTs in a number of ways. Ask them what their professional goals are and work with them to

achieve those goals. Can you give them a continuing education budget that will help them meet their goals? Are there opportunities for them to get hands-on experience in your practice, or can you allow them time off to be able to seek that experience elsewhere? Supporting your RVTs’ career goals will allow them to expand their knowledge and skills, which will help them create meaningful and long careers. Include your RVTs in decision-making when appropriate and consider their opinion, especially with changes to protocols, procedures, or equipment that will affect their day-to-day responsibilities. Including RVTs in these types of discussions can go a long way to helping them feel like they are a valued member of

“SUPPORTING YOUR RVTs’ CAREER GOALS WILL ALLOW THEM TO EXPAND THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, WHICH WILL HELP THEM CREATE MEANINGFUL AND LONG CAREERS.”

the patient care team—and studies show that when people feel fulfilled, engaged, and appreciated, morale goes up, along with employee retention rates.

The BCVTA’s vision is for every animal care facility in BC to employ and fully utilize RVTs, and we believe this is a key factor in the longevity and well-being of these amazing professionals. The association is grateful for the opportunity to share our thoughts on issues like this, and we are always happy to discuss them further. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out to us at bcvtboard@gmail.com. **WCV**



Amber Gregg, RVT, is the Executive Director and Past President of the BCVTA. She graduated from the TRU veterinary technology program in 2007 and spent eight years in mixed animal practice before gaining experience in not-for-profit management. She joined the BCVTA Board of Directors as Vice-President in 2020, and served a one-year term as President in 2021 before being appointed to the Executive Director position in 2022. Amber is grateful for everyone who made the BCVTA the strong and healthy organization it is today, and she is proud to work with the Board of Directors and members of the BCVTA to continue to advance the veterinary technology profession.