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# MEMORANDUM

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| **DATE** | April 10, 2025 |
| **TO** | Multidisciplinary Advisory Committee (MDC) |
| **FROM** | Registered Veterinary Technician Subcommittee (Subcommittee)<br>Kristi Pawlowski, RVT<br>Leah Shufelt, RVT |
| **SUBJECT** | **Agenda Item 5. Update, Discussion, and Potential Action on Recommendations from the Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT) Subcommittee** |

## A. Discussion and Possible Action to Initiate a Rulemaking to Amend California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 16, Section 2068.5 Regarding Practical Experience and Education as Equivalent Curriculum

**Background**

The Subcommittee was tasked with evaluating the RVT registration pathways and making recommendations to the MDC, and ultimately the California Veterinary Medical Board (Board), related to whether the combination of practical experience and education set forth in CCR, title 16, section 2068.5 should continue to be deemed the equivalent of a two-year curriculum in animal health technology.

Business and Professions Code (BPC) section 4841.5[1] specifies three educational pathways to obtain RVT registration: (1) graduation from a two-year program in veterinary technology in a college or other postsecondary institution approved by the Board, or equivalent thereof, as determined by the Board; (2) education or a combination of education and clinical practice experience, as determined by the Board; or (3) education equivalency certification by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) for the assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence for Veterinary Technicians. For purposes of a two-year program, all schools or degree programs accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) shall be deemed by the Board to have the minimum requirements for Board approved schools or degree programs. (CCR, tit. 16, § 2064.)

For purposes of the combination of education and clinical practice experience pathway, the Board determined a combination of education (20 semester units, 30 quarter units,

[1] Note: The Board has proposed amendments to BPC section 4841.5 in its 2025 Sunset Review Report; the Board anticipates those amendments will be included in the Board's Sunset review bill, Assembly Bill (AB) 1502 (Committee on Business and Professions, 2025).

or 300 hours of instruction) and 4,416 hours of directed clinical practice experience in specified areas to be equivalent to the two-year curriculum. (CCR, title 16, § 2068.5, subs. (a) and (f).)

For RVT applicants who hold veterinary technician licenses, certificates, or registrations in other states or territories of the United States or Canada who do not otherwise qualify for California RVT registration, the Board determined those applicants could qualify with 4,416 hours, completed in no less than 24 months, of supervised directed clinical practice, as specified. (CCR, tit. 16, § 2068.6.) Notably, that regulation does not require any education for California RVT registration.

As discussed in more detail here, after multiple stakeholder meetings, the Subcommittee recommended this regulation be repealed. The overall reason was that education is important to patient and client safety, as it provides the foundation as to "why" RVT tasks are performed that clinical experience alone, which provides the foundation as to "how" RVT tasks are performed, cannot provide.

At the January 14, 2025 MDC meeting, the MDC voted to submit to the Board the regulatory proposal to repeal CCR, title 16, section 2068.6, which the Board approved during its January 2025 Board meeting.

During the January 14, 2025 MDC meeting, the Subcommittee also raised concerns related to the educational and clinical experience components in CCR, title 16, section 2068.5. The Subcommittee's concerns were presented to the Board at its January 2025 meeting, and the Board authorized the MDC to evaluate this regulation closer to consider whether the "qualified instructor" criteria is adequate for consumer protection and to review the number of required clinical practice experience hours.

**Update and Recommendation**

The Subcommittee met in February 2025 to discuss the education and clinical practice requirements in CCR, title 16, section 2068.5. As discussed further below, the Subcommittee recommends the Board initiate a rulemaking to amend this section to address concerns related to "qualified instructors," the number and location of required clinical practice hours, and the supervising veterinarian's license and attestation requirements. The Subcommittee does not recommend reducing the existing education hours.

"Qualified Instructor"

CCR, title 16, section 2068.5, subsection (a), states, in part, the following:

> (a) The education shall consist of a minimum of 20 semester units, 30 quarter units, or 300 hours of instruction. The education shall be provided by a postsecondary academic institution *or a qualified instructor, who satisfies the qualification requirements of subsection (e)(1)*. [Emphasis added.]

At the time the regulation was enacted, there were not many education programs available in California, and they all required in-person attendance. To address the availability concern, “or a qualified instructor” was added with the belief that if an instructor met the qualifications listed in subsection (e)(1), the instructor met the same quality as those teaching at postsecondary academic institutions. Those requirements specified the instructor must meet at least two of the following requirements:

> (A) A license, registration, or certificate in an area related to the subject matter of the course. The license, registration, or certificate shall be current, valid, and free from restrictions due to disciplinary action by this board or any other health care regulatory agency;
>
> (B) A master's or higher degree from an educational institution in an area related to the subject matter of the course;
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> (C) Training, certification, or experience in teaching the subject matter of the course; or
>
> (D) At least two years' experience in an area related to the subject matter of the course. (CCR, tit. 16, § 2068.5, subs. (e)(1).)

In the last few years, the Board has received registration applications from individuals claiming to have completed the required curriculum through qualified instructors that likely did not meet the intent of the regulation.

For example, some individuals have submitted numerous RACE-approved continuing education certificates, claiming the education was provided by a “qualified instructor.” When the Board requested documentation from one applicant on how the instructors for each course qualified under subsection (e)(1), the applicant submitted an entirely new set of certificates signed by her RVT coworker.

The applicant claimed the coworker met the qualifications by having 1) a registration in the area related to the subject matter, 2) at least two years’ experience in the area related to the subject matter, and 3) experience in training the subject matter. Board staff and the Subcommittee does not believe the Board intended for the regulations to be applied this broadly. Also, based on the January 2025 Board discussion, the current Board believes formalized education is important and cannot be replaced by clinical experience alone.

In addition, in the last decade, many more accredited and post-secondary education programs have opened in California. According to the Bureau of Private Post Secondary Education’s database, there are at least 50 veterinary technician programs operating in California. Moreover, post-COVID-19, many accredited and non-accredited postsecondary education programs have moved to solely online courses.

Since the concerns regarding availability of veterinary technician education programs appear to no longer be an issue, and courses are more accessible than ever before, the Subcommittee recommends striking "or a qualified instructor, who satisfies the qualification requirements of subsection (e)(1)." and all of subsection (e). Striking these sections will ensure the RVT applicants are obtaining the equivalent quality of education as originally intended.

Clinical Practice Hours

Currently, RVT applicants applying for registration under the combined education and experience pathway are required to complete 4,416 hours of directed clinical practice hours under the supervision of a California-licensed veterinarian.

When the Board previously discussed a similar requirement for out-of-state licensed veterinarians to complete 4,416 practice hours to obtain California veterinarian licensure, the Board recommended to the California State Legislature a proposal to decrease that number to 2,500 hours. (See BPC, § 4846; AB 1535 (Committee on Business and Professions, Ch. 631, Stats. 2021).)

During that discussion, the Board raised concerns the 4,416 practice hours were excessive and potentially punitive to individuals with children who may not be able to meet that requirement as easily as individuals without children.

For those same reasons, and since the combined education and experience pathway requires both education and clinical practice experience, the Subcommittee recommends the 4,416 hours of clinical practice required for the education and experience pathway be decreased to 2,500 hours.

California-Licensed Veterinarian Supervisor

The Subcommittee is also concerned with the onerous requirement the clinical practice experience be completed under the direct supervision of a California licensed veterinarian. As discussed above, the Board has approved the rulemaking to repeal the out-of-state registrant pathway under CCR, title 16, section 2068.6; once enacted, there would not be a clear path for RVTs who are licensed, certified, or registered in another state to obtain a registration in California if they graduated from a non-accredited veterinary technician program.

The only option for out-of-state applicants would be to redo their clinical practical experience under a California-licensed veterinarian. The Subcommittee believes this is an unnecessary barrier, and out-of-state applicants should be able to use their clinical practice experience hours obtained in another state toward the California RVT registration requirement.

Removing this barrier to California RVT registration may increase the number of RVT registrants and increase access to veterinary care. Thus, the Subcommittee recommends striking the "California-licensed" requirement in CCR, title 16, section 2068.5, subsection (f).

However, the Subcommittee would like the MDC to consider whether there should be a limitation on where the supervising veterinarian should be licensed and/or where the RVT registration applicant's clinical practice should occur.

The attached regulatory proposal includes three options:

> Option 1:
> This option would require the veterinarian supervisor to be "licensed in any state or territory of the United States or Canadian province." This language was mirrored after the clinical practice requirement for veterinarian applicants who had passed the national examination over five years from the date of the application. (BPC, § 4846, subd. (a)(5)(A)(ii).)
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> Option 2:
> This option would require the applicant's clinical practice hours to occur "in any state or territory of the United States or Canadian province" under the direct supervision of any licensed veterinarian (no specification on where the veterinarian is licensed). This option would address the potential for an applicant to obtain clinical practice experience in another country where the practice standards may be significantly different than those in North America.
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> Option 3:
> This option combines Option 1 and Option 2.

Notably, each of the above options would reduce the clinical practice experience hours from 4,416 to 2,500 and resolve the supervising veterinarian's attestation statement issues discussed further below.

Supervising Veterinarian's Attestation Statement: Clinical Practice Hours
CCR, title 16, section 2068.5, subsection (f), requires the veterinarian supervising the clinical practice of the RVT registration applicant to "attest to the completion of that experience *at the time the application is made to the board for the registered veterinary technician examination."* (Emphasis added.)

Since applicants no longer apply to the Board to take the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE), but instead apply to take the VTNE directly to the examination administrator, the attestation requirement is interpreted to mean submission of the attestation "at the time of application for RVT registration." However, this requirement has proved difficult for individuals who may have completed clinical practice experience at under various supervising veterinarians, at various locations, and/or over an extended period.

The Board also received an application for which the applicant struggled to document their clinical practice experience at the time of submission of their application because the supervising veterinarian had passed away by the time of the application submission.

In addition, it is common for an applicant to have completed clinical practice experience under multiple supervising veterinarians. Since clinical practice experience does not expire, the Subcommittee recommends striking "at the time the application is made to the board for the registered veterinary technician examination" from subsection (f). This regulatory amendment would allow each supervising veterinarian to attest to the clinical practice hours as soon as they were completed.

Supervising Veterinarian's Attestation Statement: Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
CCR, title 16, section 2068.5, subsection (g), states the following:

> (g) The directed clinical practice required in subsection (f) shall have provided the applicant with knowledge, skills, and abilities in the areas of communication with clients, patient examinations, emergency procedures, laboratory procedures, diagnostic imaging, surgical assisting, anesthesia, animal nursing, nutrition, dentistry, animal behavior, and pharmacology. The supervising veterinarian(s) shall complete a check list attesting to proficiency in specific skill areas within the preceding categories.

The Subcommittee recommends amending the language in subsection (g) to allow the supervising veterinarian(s) to attest to only those categories the supervisor oversaw and is comfortable attesting to. Since the knowledge, skills, and abilities may be gained under multiple supervising veterinarians over time, a supervising veterinarian may have only overseen the applicant's patient examinations, client communications, and surgical assisting, but not the other areas. A supervising veterinarian should be able to attest to only those categories for which the veterinarian supervising the applicant rather than the entire list.

Eliminating the Checklist
Over the last decade, the Board has directed RVT registration applicants to submit a completed "Registered Veterinary Technician Task List – Proof of Experience" check list to meet the requirement under CCR, title 16, section 2068.5, subsection (g). However, this check list is far more extensive than the general categories listed in subsection (g), and the check list is not incorporated by reference in the regulation.

Upon reviewing the check list, the Subcommittee believes there are multiple outdated and unnecessary tasks specified in the check list. Overall, the Subcommittee believes the Board should trust the professional judgement of the licensed veterinarian supervisor who is attesting to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the applicant in each category.

If a supervisor is willing to sign a statement attesting to the applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities in each category, that should be sufficient to meet the requirement. As such, the Subcommittee recommends removal of the check list requirement from subsection (g).

Board Staff Recommendation on Proof of Education for Education and Experience Pathway

CCR, title 16, 2068.5, subsection (d), requires RVT registration applicants applying through the combination of education and experience pathway to provide the Board with a syllabus or an outline for each course and documentation of attendance. Accepting course outlines and proof of attendance from candidates risks the Board receiving altered documents. Proof of completion of education should be provided directly to the Board from the primary source or primary source verified.

BPC section 4841.5, subdivision (a), requires proof of graduation to be submitted directly to the Board by the college, other postsecondary institution, or AAVSB. Notably, proof of completion of education is not required to be submitted by education providers for combined education and experience pathway applicants in BPC section 4841.5, subdivision (b).

In the Board's 2025 Sunset Review Report, the Board has requested amendments to BPC section 4841.5 to expand and clarify the RVT registration pathways. Board staff recommends additional amendments to this statute to require, for the combination of education and experience pathway, proof of completion of education be submitted directly to the Board by the postsecondary institution or AAVSB.

Until such amendments go into effect, Board staff recommends CCR, title 16, 2068.5, subsection (d), be amended to require proof of completion of education be sent directly to the Board from the postsecondary institution or AAVSB. If this provision is included in the Board's Sunset bill, the proposed amendments to CCR, title 16, section 2068.5, subsection (d), would be unnecessary, and subsection (d), in its entirety, could be proposed to be repealed during the 45-day public comment period of the rulemaking process.

**Action Requested**

If the MDC agrees with the Subcommittee and Staff recommendations, please entertain a motion to recommend the Board take the following actions:

> Approve the regulatory text in Attachment 1 [as revised at this meeting] to amend CCR, title 16, section 2068.5, using [CHOOSE: Option 1, Option 2, or Option 3] for subsection (f).
>
> Direct staff to submit the text to the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency for review, and if the Board does not receive any comments providing objections or adverse recommendations specifically directed at the proposed action or to the procedures followed by the Board in proposing or adopting the action, then the Board authorizes the Executive Officer to take all steps necessary to initiate the rulemaking process, make any technical or non-substantive changes to the package, and set the matter for hearing, if requested.

If after the 45-day public comment period, no adverse comments are received, and no public hearing is requested, authorize the Executive Officer to take all steps necessary to complete the rulemaking, and adopt the proposed regulations as described in the text notice for CCR, title 16, section 2068.5.

**Attachment**

1. Proposed Regulatory Language to Amend CCR, Title 16, Section 2068.5 Regarding Veterinary Technician Registration Experience and Education

CALIFORNIA VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
**TITLE 16.** VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD

# PROPOSED REGULATORY LANGUAGE
## Veterinary Technician Registration Experience and Education

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| **Legend:** | Added text is indicated with an underline.<br>Deleted text is indicated by ~~strikeout~~. |

**Amend section 2068.5 of Division 20 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations to read as follows:**

### § 2068.5. Practical Experience and Education as Equivalent Curriculum.

In lieu of a two year curriculum in animal health technology, completion of a combination of practical experience and education in compliance with the following criteria is deemed to be "the equivalent thereof as determined by the board" pursuant to Section 4841.5 of the code:

(a) The education shall consist of a minimum of 20 semester units, 30 quarter units, or 300 hours of instruction. The education shall be provided by a postsecondary academic institution ~~or a qualified instructor, who satisfies the qualification requirements of subsection (e)(1)~~. The education shall be accumulated in the fundamentals and principles of all of the following subjects:

(1) Dental prophylaxis and extraction.

(2) Anesthetic instrumentation, induction, and monitoring.

(3) Surgical nursing and assisting, including instrumentation, suturing techniques, intravascular catheter placement, and application of casts and splints.

(4) Radiography and radiation safety.

(5) Diseases and nursing of animals, including zoonotic diseases and emergency veterinary care.

(b) The education shall include instruction in chemistry, mathematics, biology, microbiology, anatomy and physiology, and medical terminology, or these subjects may be obtained as separate courses.

(c) Interactive distance-learning shall be accepted if the course meets all the criteria listed in this section and the candidate achieves a documented passing score on the course final examination.

(d) ~~The candidate shall provide the board with a syllabus or an outline for each course. The candidate shall provide documentation of attendance for each course in the form of one of the following:~~

~~(1) a certificate of attendance,~~

~~(2) an official transcript, or~~

~~(3) a letter on official stationery signed by the course instructor documenting that the candidate attended a particular course.~~ Proof of completion of education specified under subsection (a) shall be submitted directly to the board by the postsecondary institution, or American Association of Veterinary State Boards.

~~(e) (1) In order for an instructor to be approved for qualification, the instructor must meet at least two of the following minimum requirements:~~

~~(A) A license, registration, or certificate in an area related to the subject matter of the course. The license, registration, or certificate shall be current, valid, and free from restrictions due to disciplinary action by this board or any other health care regulatory agency;~~

~~(B) A master's or higher degree from an educational institution in an area related to the subject matter of the course;~~

~~(C) Training, certification, or experience in teaching the subject matter of the course; or~~

~~(D) At least two years' experience in an area related to the subject matter of the course.~~

~~(2) The instructor shall provide each participant with a course syllabus or detailed outline which includes a description of the material covered.~~

[Option 1:

(f) The directed clinical practice shall consist of at least ~~4,416~~ 2,500 hours of directed clinical practice under the direct supervision of a ~~California-licensed~~ veterinarian(s) licensed in any state or territory of the United States or Canadian province who shall attest to the completion of that experience ~~at the time the application is made to the board for the registered veterinary technician examination~~.

OR

Option 2:

(f) The directed clinical practice shall consist of at least ~~4,416~~ 2,500 hours of directed clinical practice in any state or territory of the United States or Canadian province under

the direct supervision of a ~~California~~ licensed veterinarian(s) who shall attest to the completion of that experience ~~at the time the application is made to the board for the registered veterinary technician examination~~.

OR

Option 3:

(f) The directed clinical practice shall consist of at least 2,5004~~,416~~ hours of directed clinical practice in any state or territory of the United States or Canadian province under the direct supervision of a ~~California licensed~~ veterinarian(s) licensed in any state or territory of the United States or Canadian province who shall attest to the completion of that experience ~~at the time the application is made to the board for the registered veterinary technician examination~~.]

(g) The directed clinical practice required in subsection (f) shall have provided the applicant with knowledge, skills, and abilities in each of the ~~areas~~ following categories: ~~of~~ communication with clients;~~,~~ patient examinations;~~,~~ emergency procedures;~~,~~ laboratory procedures;~~,~~ diagnostic imaging;~~,~~ surgical assisting;~~,~~ anesthesia;~~,~~ animal nursing;~~,~~ nutrition;~~,~~ dentistry;~~,~~ animal behavior;~~,~~ and pharmacology. The supervising veterinarian(s) for each category shall ~~complete a check list~~ attest~~ing~~ to the applicant's proficiency in performing the ~~specific~~ skills and abilities in that category ~~areas within the preceding categories~~.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 4808, Business and Professions Code.
Reference: Section 4841.5, Business and Professions Code.