I have to say it: I’m thrilled that the Veterinary Nurse Initiative Coalition is moving forward. It is the best thing for our profession.

The goals of the Coalition are:

→ To standardize the credential for the veterinary technician profession in terms of credentialing requirements, title, and scope of practice throughout the United States

→ To have the standardized title be used in all 50 states

→ To set a standard in all 50 states for maintenance of credentials

→ To unify the profession and grow professional recognition

→ To increase veterinary consumer understanding of what credentialed veterinary technicians/nurses do on a daily basis in regard to patient care

So why am I so thrilled? I believe we are nurses dealing with furry, feathered, or scaled nonspeaking creatures. We are anesthesia nurses, lab technicians, radiology technicians, ER nurses, and primary care nurses. Need I say more? We can do it all.

Yet our profession is fragmented. We have credentialed veterinary technicians; veterinary technicians who have been formally trained but are not required to become credentialed per their state practice act; veterinary technicians trained by their employer who are veterinary assistants (unless they are grandfathered); certified veterinary assistants; and veterinary assistants trained in practice. That’s way too many categories. Is there another profession that splits itself so many ways? I can’t think of one.

According to Heather Prendergast, BS, RVT, CVPM, SPHR, and a leading member of the Coalition, we need consolidation in our field to remove the confusion. The varied titles and requirements create confusion not only in the profession, but especially for pet owners. Ask yourself, would you want to be treated for an illness by someone whose license you’re not sure of? Clients know what nurses do for them. It would be great for our profession to gain the same respect from clients by understanding we fill the same shoes.

NAVTA wants to bring us all together under one title: registered veterinary nurse.

**ON THE AGENDA**

One of the first items on the agenda is getting the support of veterinarians. We are not competing for their role. We are seeking their recognition of the skills we have earned through training and their trust in delegating responsibility to us. Gaining their backing is critical. Then, once we have increased awareness of our abilities among veterinarians, we head to the states and drive change in our practice acts. Finally, we extend our communications with pet owners to increase their awareness of everything we can do for their beloved family members.

**CHEERS TO NAVTA AND THE AVMA**

The AVMA has been supporting the veterinary technician profession for years and will be working with NAVTA to move the goals of the Coalition forward. Having the AVMA supporting this endeavor is a huge achievement. In a recent press release, Kara Burns, MS, Med, LVT, VTS (Nutrition), and President-Elect of NAVTA, stated that through standardization and public awareness of the registered veterinary nurse credential, our profession will become better recognized, more able to easily transfer to different states or roles, and, ultimately, more involved in elevating the standard of care we provide.

Now is the time for each of us to get involved and speak up. Contact NAVTA and your state association. You can let NAVTA know what you think about the credentialing efforts on NAVTA.net. Change won’t happen overnight, so let’s keep the initiative moving forward. I for one want my voice heard!

To find out what NAVTA has already learned, visit the Veterinary Nurse Credential Initiative page on NAVTA.net.

Do you have a story you’d like to share? Write me at ljohson@navc.com.