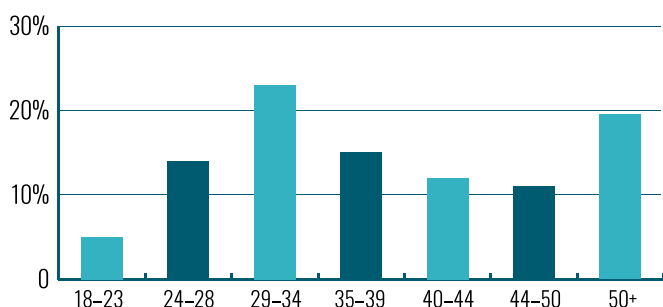


NAVTA 2016 DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY RESULTS

The National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) conducted study by posting an online link for the 2016 NAVTA Demographic Survey, which was open to veterinary team members (current and past) from February 1 – April 15, 2016. The goal of the study was to obtain an accurate picture of the current state of the veterinary technician (VT) profession. A total of 2,790 responses were received; skip logic was used in the survey, therefore, specific questions have varied numbers of responses. Team member position was not verified, as the demographic survey was 100% anonymous. For the purpose of reporting, any reference to CVT refers to Credentialed Veterinary Technician, including those licensed, registered or certified in their respective states.



NAVTA recognizes and thanks Merial for their generous sponsorship of the 2016 Demographic Survey.



Age of respondents varied, with the largest proportion in the age range of 29-34 years (**22.9%**), followed by 50+ (**19.5%**).

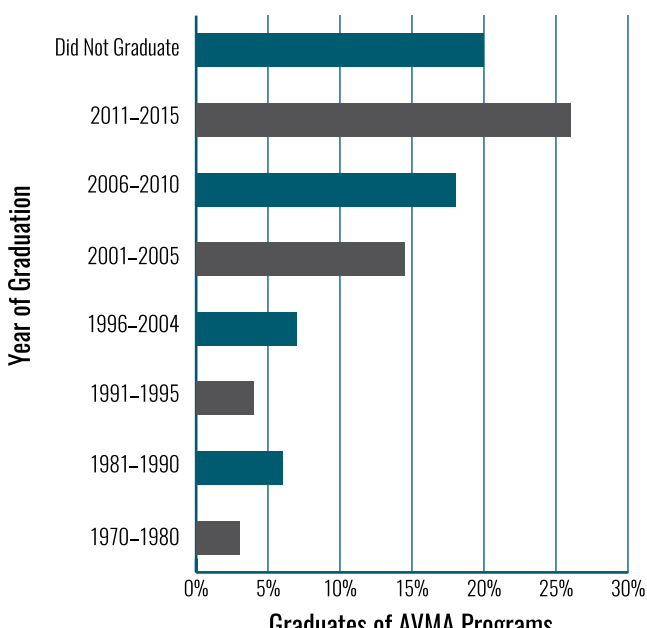
94.7% of respondents were female.

79.8% of respondents were graduates of an AVMA accredited Veterinary Technology Program. However, a small amount of non-graduates indicated they were grandfathered and are therefore credentialed within the state in which they practice. **25.6%** of respondents graduated between 2011 and 2015.

A majority of respondents have an Associate's degree (**55%**), while **30%** have a Bachelor's Degree. A small percentage holds a Master's degree (**5.6%**), PhD, JD, or a doctorate in veterinary medicine.

1.5% of respondents were students.

CURRENT TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	%
Companion Animal Practice	37.2%
Specialty Practice	11.9%
Emergency Practice	11.0%
University	7.0%
Veterinary Technology Education	6.7%
Mixed Animal Practice	6.6%
Non-Profit	2.5%
Animal Shelter	2.3%
Diagnostic/Research Lab	1.9%
Industry/Sales (Food manufacturer, pharmaceutical, distributor)	1.9%
Self Employed / Consultant	1.8%
Equine Practice	1.1%
City/County/Federal Government	0.8%
Food Animal Practice	0.6%



Respondents were employed in a variety of areas in veterinary medicine; some are more specialized than others. **1.46%** indicated they were unemployed at the time of the survey, **0.3%** retired from the field and **0.24%** work in the human medical field. Overall, **78.8%** currently work as a VT in practice.

Of those that answered they are not currently working in practice, approximately **45%** indicate they have left the veterinary profession/industry (**2%** being in the human healthcare field), **7%** are currently in veterinary technology education, **2%** in veterinary pharmaceutical sales, and **2%** are self-employed. Reasons for leaving practice include insufficient pay (**38%**), lack of respect from the employer (**20%**), burnout (**14%**), lack of benefits, childcare difficulties, lack of respect for the profession and compassion fatigue.

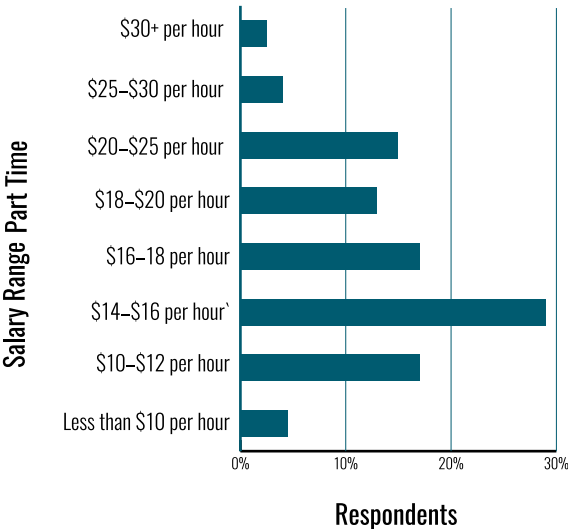
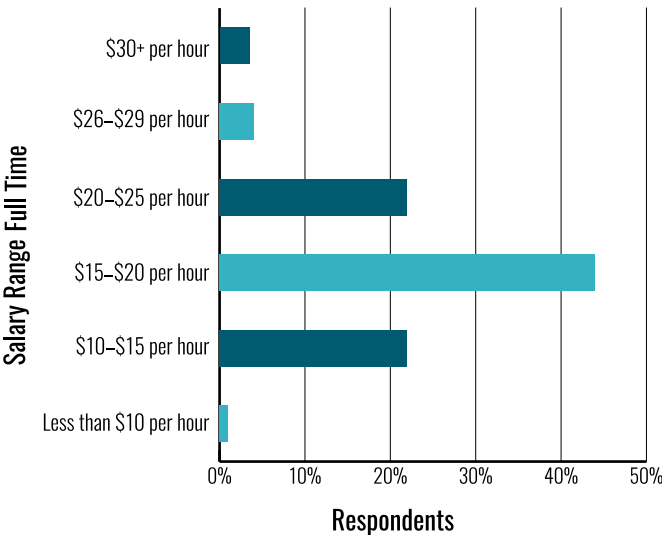
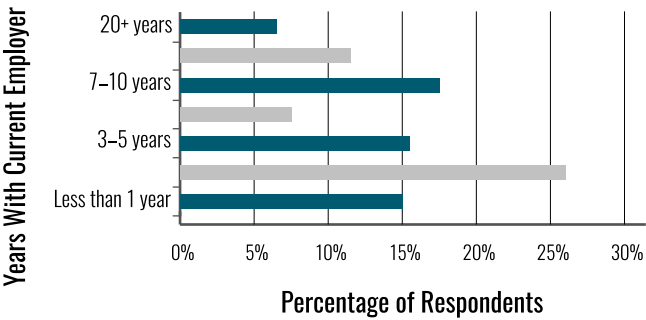
As of 2016, there is a known shortage of credentialed VTs, and the difficulty in finding qualified personnel to fill positions is a major complaint by veterinary practices. Measures to continue driving interest in the field is needed. Attracting and retaining qualified individuals is critical to the growth of the VT/nursing profession.

Of respondents that are employed in a veterinary technology/nursing position, **83.4%** indicated being a credentialed VT, while **11.6%** were non-credentialed, and **3.5%** designated themselves as veterinary assistants. **9%** of the reported credentialed technicians (**83.4%**) are also VT Specialists, and/or currently employed in education (**1.6%**). Some respondents are primarily educators, however continue to work in private practice.

55.6% of respondents indicated their practice is in a suburban area, while **31.2%** are in an urban, metropolitan area. **13.2%** are employed in rural or farm communities.

The largest number of respondents (**25.9%**) had worked for their current employer for 1-3 years. Over half (**56.7%**) had changed their place of employment within the first 5 years. **24%** have more than 1 place of employment and **3.1%** have more than 2 places of employment.

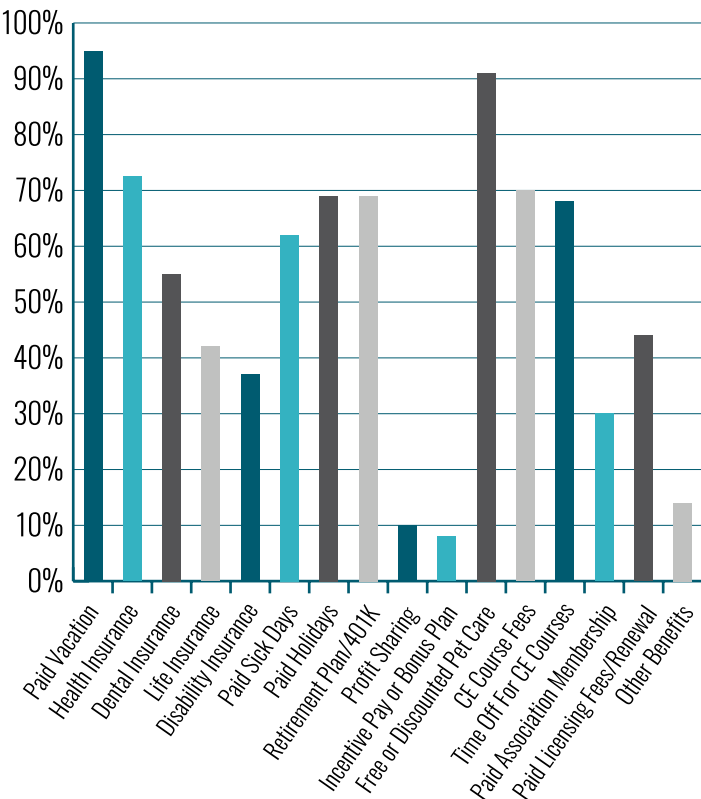
Current Employment



Most VTs work 30-40 hours per week (43%) followed by 40-50 hours per week (37.6%). Full time technicians report a salary between \$15-20 per hour (44%); whereas part-time technicians indicate \$14-16 per hour (29%). In comparison, the poverty line in the United States for a family of 4 is \$24,300 . Well-paid VTs are only slightly above the poverty line once income taxes are considered.

Benefits

More than **80%** of respondents receive paid vacation and reduced/discounted pet care as a benefit at their place of employment. **70%** receive health insurance, CE associated expense reimbursements, and paid holidays. **60%** have a retirement plan that they can contribute to, as well as paid sick days. **50%** receive dental health insurance and time off for CE. Less than **40%** receive paid licensing fees, life insurance, disability insurance, paid association membership fees or uniform allowance. Some respondents indicated they were part time; therefore not all benefits applied to them.



More benefits are being offered than ever before; however, a majority of VTs are still responsible for their licensing fees, association memberships and uniforms. This could be a reason many choose not to join associations that support their profession.

Forward Booking Appointments/Wellness Plans

Over **50%** of respondents indicated they did not understand the phrase ‘forward booking appointments’. According to Partners for Healthy Pets, forward booking is defined as “booking the next appointment for ALL patients before the client leaves the practice, and may include medical progress exams (rechecks), boosters, annual or bi-annual preventive healthcare. **37%** of respondents indicated they do not forward book any appointments, including medical progress exams or boosters. **59%** forward book medical progress exams; **51%** forward book boosters; **42%** indicate they forward book annual preventive healthcare exams. However, based on the

responses indicating the uncertainty of forward booking, this higher percentage may indicate respondents scheduled appointments once reminders had been sent out.

Forward booking drives better client compliance; therefore, there is a need to better educate practices about the power of forward booking.

EXAM/PROCEDURE TO FORWARD BOOK	%
Medical Progress Exams	58.57%
Boosters	50.60%
Annual Preventive Health Exams	42.36%
Surgery/Dental Procedures	3.85%
Specialty/Referral/Emergency (does not apply)	2.42%
Do not forward book	36.59%

Wellness Plans

Wellness Plans are defined as plans a client can enroll their pet in that generally includes inclusive preventive health care. Some examples include puppy/kitten plans, adult, and senior plans. **71%** of practices do not offer wellness plans for clients.

Technology:

88% of practices are utilizing digital radiology machines, **8%** are utilizing analog, and **3%** were unsure of what type of radiology machine is used in their practice.

Social Media Platforms

Facebook is the most prevalent social media platform that is used for client education and community outreach. Respondents also listed their website as a means for educating clients and serving as a source for community outreach. Less than **1%** of practices in the survey utilize pet portals.

PLATFORM	% THAT UTILIZE
Facebook	88.5%
Website	87.8%
Twitter	15.3%
Instagram	10.1%
Google+	9.8%
Pinterest	3.7%
App	0.5%
Blogs/E-newsletters	0.5%
Pet Portal	0.4%
YouTube	0.4%
No Social Media Platforms in Use	3.5%

Recommendations in Practice

Paraciticides:

- **81%** of respondents were employed at practices recommending year-round flea and tick prevention; **13%** at practices recommending prevention only in warmer months.
- **88%** of respondents were employed at practices recommending year-round heartworm prevention and **6%** at practices recommending prevention only during warmer months. **6%** indicated they do not recommend it, as they do not have heartworm issues in their area.

BARRIER OF RECOMMENDATIONS	%
Price is a barrier all of the time	5.3%
Price is most often the barrier	38.2%
Price is a barrier some of the time	51.8%
Not applicable - our clients always follow our recommendations, regardless of price	2.4%

When making recommendations, colleague recommendations and CE seminars influence VTs the most, followed by a product trial on personal pets.

Respondents indicated recommendations were made to clients **60%** of the time, and felt **69%** of clients accept their recommendations 'most' of the time, **28%** of clients follow recommendations 'occasionally', and **3%** of clients always follow recommendations. For those that indicated clients do not always accept recommendations, **38%** felt price was the barrier 'most' of the time, **52%** felt price was the barrier occasionally, and **5%** indicate price is 'always' an issue.

68% of practices schedule veterinary technician specific appointments

29% of respondents indicated they spend about 5-10 minutes with clients in exam rooms, followed by **27%** that spend 10-15 minutes in the exam room with clients. 15% spend more than 15 minutes with clients. **16%** of respondents do not spend time with clients, or work in emergency/specialty practices; therefore, the question did not specifically apply to them.

Technicians were asked to identify areas that they were responsible for when it comes to educating clients. Most VTs are responsible for educating clients regarding the administration of medication (**79%**), followed by correct care for patients (**71%**), treatment protocols (**64%**) and pain management (**56%**). When asked to identify how comfortable they are with educating on those topics, respondents indicated they are most comfortable with educating about medication administration, while least comfortable topics include nutrition,

TOPICS TO EDUCATE CLIENTS ABOUT	%	RANK COMFORT LEVEL W/ TASK	LEVEL OF EMPOWERMENT
Administration of medication	79%	1	1
Caring for animal	71%	2	2
Treatment protocols	64%	3	4
Pain management	56%	8	8
Preventive healthcare	56%	6	5
Parasiticide use	55%	9	6
Anesthetic risks	54%	7	7
Status of their pets' health to date	53%	5	9
Nutritional products (food and diet recommendations)	51%	10	10
Your role as their VT	50%	4	3
Diabetes management	43%	11	12
Hospice care	31%	12	11

diabetes management and hospice care. In addition, participants were asked to indicate how empowered they were by the practice to educate owners regarding the same topics. Again, most practices empower technicians to educate about administration of medication and caring for the pet. Least empowered topics include nutrition, hospice and diabetes.

When asked how strongly VTs' opinions were considered in practice, a majority responded that their opinion counts when it comes to equipment (**98%**), pain management protocols (**60%**) and anesthetic protocols (**nearly 60%**). Nursing care was far behind at **8%**, followed by management topics at **5%**.

3% of respondents indicated they were in specialty practice, and their opinion is included in every aspect of patient care, including nursing care, laboratory procedures and diagnostic tests. The most alarming stat is that 4.5% of respondents felt their opinion did not count at all.

Greatest Challenges in Practice

Respondents were asked what the greatest challenges were that they faced in daily practice (multiple answers could be selected). Although a majority of respondents indicated office dynamics and team communication as the greatest challenge, lack of client compliance was a close second. However, many respondents took the opportunity to write in their greatest challenge, which included lack of management and being understaffed. Other comments included low wages, lack of technician utilization, and competition between credentialed technicians and non-credentialed technicians. **2.31%** offered responses that did not fit into the stated categories, and **0.77%** did not have a challenge to state.

To further clarify the competition between credentialed and non-credentialed technicians, respondents indicated it was cheaper for a practice to train assistants on the job then to hire a formally trained, credentialed technician to carry out the job duties.

GREATEST CHALLENGE	%
Office Dynamics/Communication/Personnel	50%
Client non-compliance	39%
Lack of Resources Within the Clinic	11%
Other Challenges:	
Lack of/under managed	5%
Understaffed	5%
Client Finances	3%
Low wages	1%
Lack of Technician Utilization	1%
OJT cheaper to employ than CVT	.5%
Corporate Politics	.27%
No challenges	.77%
Miscellaneous	2.31

To help deliver better quality care to clients, respondents indicated that additional staff members would help (**45%**), followed by increased client compliance (**43%**). **32%** would like more CE opportunities, and **23%** would like more advanced diagnostic tools to utilize in the practice.

Respondents were asked to determine the top 3 factors that would most likely affect their job in the next 5 years. **76%** indicate a national standardization of veterinary technology/credentials and

DELIVERING CARE MORE EFFECTIVELY	%
Additional personnel (veterinarians, technicians and /or administrators) within the practice	45.4%
Greater compliance/frequency of visits by clients	43.1%
More and better options for continuing education	31.5%
More advanced diagnostic tools in the practice	22.5%
Other	
Improved management	4%
More client financial resources	2%
Lower cost products/services	1.9%
More time to educate owners	1.9%
Teaching tools for owners	1.4%
Delineate between OJT and CVT duties	0.6%
More pet health insurance options	0.2%
Does not apply to me	2.1%

FACTORS THAT POSITIVELY AFFECT JOB	%
National standardization of VT credentials / education	76%
Competitive salary and benefits	54%
Technological advancements	34%
Specialization in veterinary technology	33%
Availability of relevant CE	33%
Economy	29%
Increased clinic volume/clients	25%
Animal welfare	20%
Corporate veterinary practices	3.1%
Other	
Improved Management	1.1%
Miscellaneous	1.5%
Does not apply to me	1%

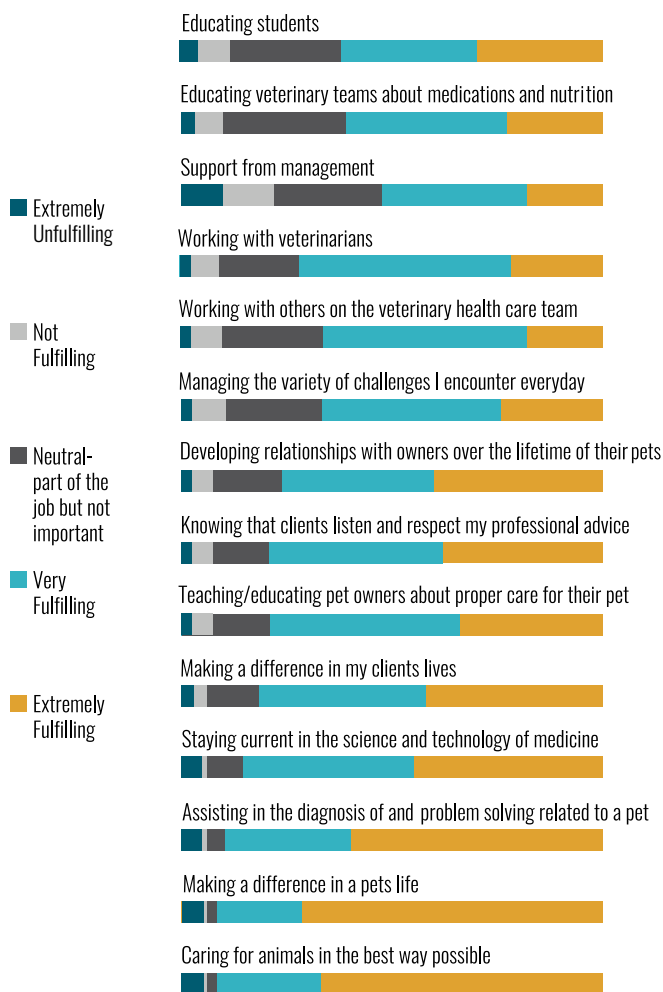
education, followed by a competitive salary and benefits (**54%**), and technology advancements (**34%**).

3 factors that respondents indicated they expect will negatively affect their job include low salary and benefits (**54%**), compassion fatigue (**41%**) and the economy (**39%**).

FACTORS THAT NEGATIVELY AFFECT JOB	%
Low salary and Benefits	54%
Compassion Fatigue	41%
Economy	39%

The top 6 most significant problems that face individuals as credentialed VTs include low income, burnout, lack of recognition and career advancement, the underutilization of skills, and the competition with on the job trained technicians.





Respondents were asked to rank the most fulfilling aspects of veterinary technology (1 -5; 5 being the most fulfilling). The least fulfilling aspect indicated was the lack of support from management.

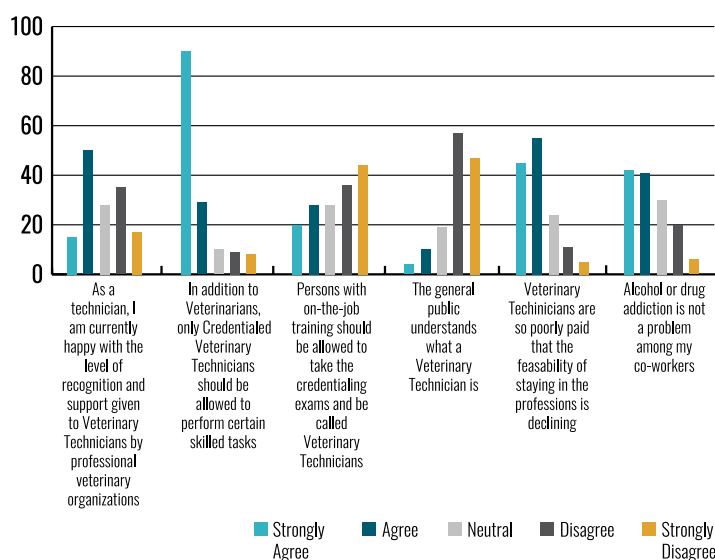
JOB SATISFACTION	%
I am very satisfied and will stay in veterinary technology	51.3%
I will probably stay in veterinary technology	28.6%
I will probably change to another field in the future	9.6%
I am dissatisfied and will definitely change to another field	1.8%
Undecided	4.7%
I have already changed to another field	4.1%

When asked how satisfied VTs were in their position, 51 % of respondents indicated they are very satisfied with their career and will stay in veterinary technology.

The 'satisfiers' listed by respondents are easily tied to the skills taught to credentialed VTs while in school. Utilizing CVTs to their fullest extent increases job satisfaction tremendously. However, when management is unsupportive and does not push for appropriate staff leveraging and utilization, team morale drops.

Whole Team Wellness

Respondents were asked to rate the following statements from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5):



The general public does not understand what VTs do; therefore, it should be the responsibility of every CVT, state and national association to create a consumer education campaign in order to increase the comprehension of the care provided by credentialed VTs.

A majority of respondents disagree that OJT technicians should be allowed to take credentialing examinations and be called VTs.

Being that compassion fatigue was identified as a factor that would negatively impact VTs, respondents were asked if their practice discussed compassion fatigue with the team. **70%** indicated yes, the impact of compassion fatigue is discussed; however, only **23%** offer support for the team experiencing compassion fatigue. **1.8%** of respondents indicated they have had a fellow coworker commit suicide due to compassion fatigue; only **3%** of those that experienced the suicide had any grief counseling provided to the team. Whole Team Wellness is an initiative being explored by many organizations, including the AVMA. To better serve the professionals of the veterinary team, tools and support networks encompassing compassion fatigue should be implemented into practices immediately.

Opinions on National Credential

- **90%** agree that a national standardized credential requirement is important. **3%** disagree, while **7%** remain undecided.
- **91%** agree that a consistent title for the profession, across all states is important; **3%** disagree and **5%** are undecided.

TITLE	%
Registered VT (RVT)	11.9%
Licensed VT (LVT)	19%
Certified VT (CVT)	7.0%
Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN)	34.4%
Certified Veterinary Nurse (CVN)	3.4%
Licensed Veterinary Nurse (LVN)	16.2%
Undecided	8.7%
Just be consistent!	0.3%

Respondents were asked if they prefer the title Veterinary Nurse or Veterinary Technician. **54%** of respondents preferred “veterinary nurse”, while **38%** preferred “veterinary technician”. **9%** were undecided.

Those that chose the Veterinary Nurse title chose it because it would improve the public’s understanding of the role (**68%**), and **17%** thought it would increase respect for the profession. Those that chose the VT title chose it because they feel VTs perform more tasks than nurses (**55%**), while **42%** feel it is most appropriate for the role.

Comparison to Previous Years

- The average age of respondents in 2016 was 29-34— compared to 40 years of age in 2012 and 38 years of age in 2007. The population remains **95%** female, same in 2012 and 2007.
- **79%** of respondents were employed as VTs in 2016, compared to **86%** in 2012. **56%** of practices are in a suburban setting, compared to **50%** in 2012.
- **55%** of respondents have an Associate Degree compared to **75%** in 2012 and **78%** in 2007. However, those with a Bachelor’s Degree increased to **30%** in 2016, compared to **11%** in 2012.

MBRS refers to NAVTA Members. In the 2003, 2007 and 2011 demographic study, results were broken into member and nonmember categories. In 2016, the study was updated to include both members and nonmembers within the same category.

- **37%** of respondents are employed in companion animal practice, compared to **40%** in 2012.
- Animal nursing, anesthesia, client communication and client education are the top functions of VTs in 2016, almost identical to 2012 results.
- **51%** of respondents are very satisfied with their job in 2016, down from **53.1 %** in 2011.
- Low income was by far the most significant problem facing VTs in 2016, compared to lack of professional recognition as the main issue in 2012 (placing 3rd in 2016). Other issues were similar in both 2016 and 2012, and include burnout, lack of career advancement, underutilized skills, understaffed/undermanaged and long hours.
- Unchanged from 2012 to 2016 are the most fulfilling aspects of the job: Caring for animals in the best way possible, making a difference in a pet’s life, assisting in the diagnosis, and staying current on the science and technology of medicine.
- Technology has shifted since 2012, when **66%** of respondent practices had a Facebook page, compared to **89%** in 2016. **11%** of practices utilized Twitter in 2012, compared to 15% in 2016.
- Continuing Education articles, the NAVTA Journal, career related articles, case studies, and opportunities to earn CE credit are the NAVTA programs most frequently identified as Very/Somewhat Important services and programs in both 2012 and 2016 studies.
- Overall, benefits for VTs have improved.

This program was reviewed and approved by the AAVSB RACE program for **1** hour of continuing education in jurisdictions which recognize AAVSB RACE approval. Please contact the AAVSB RACE program if you have any comments/concerns regarding this program’s validity or relevancy to the veterinary profession.

	2016 ALL	2011 MBRS	2007 MBRS	2003 MBRS	2011 NON-MBRS	2007 NON-MBRS	2003 NON-MBRS
I am satisfied and will definitely stay in veterinary technology	51.3%	53.1%	43.4%	42.5%	48.8%	41.9%	34.3%
I will probably stay in veterinary technology in the future	28.6%	35.2%	39.2%	42.1%	31.2%	43.3%	44.3%
I will probably change to another field in the future	9.6%	9.4%	12.8%	11.1%	14.8%	11.1%	14.9%
I’m dissatisfied and will definitely change to another field	1.8%	2.2%	2.6%	2.8%	5.2%	2.6%	4.3%

RESPONDENT BENEFITS	2016	2011	2007	2003	1999	1995
Paid vacation	85%	82%	93%	91%	92%	90%
Health Insurance	74%	74%	83%	81%	78%	67%
Free or discounted animal care	82%	68%	82%	81%	86%	83%
CE registration	72%	64%	79%	73%	74%	60%
Paid holidays	69%	69%	75%	75%	74%	70%
Paid sick leave	63%	59%	66%	67%	67%	59%
Retirement/pension plan	69%	56%	66%	61%	52%	33%
CE time off	58%	54%	62%	60%	60%	54%
Dental Insurance	55%	53%	49%	45%	38%	26%
Uniform/equipment allowance	5%	49%	-	-	-	-
CE travel and lodging	72%	41%	57%	48%	47%	35%
Life Insurance	43%	37%	32%	32%	31%	27%
Credentialing fees	45%	31%	36%	30%	26%	n/a
State association dues	30%	30%	40%	38%	33%	23%
Disability Insurance	37%	27%	29%	25%	25%	n/a
NAVTA dues	30%	26%	34%	31%	26%	16%
Profit-sharing	10%	13%	-	-	-	-
Flex-time	-	11%	-	-	-	-
Incentive pay	18%	7%	-	-	-	-
Malpractice Insurance	-	4%	4%	5%	6%	3%
Housing/apartment	-	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%



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