

# UNLOCKING POTENTIAL: EMPOWERING RVTs FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

BY AMBER GREGG, RVT

**M**any RVTs venture outside the field to explore career avenues that better tap into their potential. The BCVTA's vision is for all animal care facilities in BC to employ and fully utilize RVTs. This goal remains unattainable if we continue to lose talented RVTs because they are unable to fully leverage their education and training. We empower RVTs with the skills they need to thrive in practice, and we are now engaging stakeholders to showcase the breadth of those skills and the value of expanding the role of an RVT.

Encouraging RVTs to grow often feels like preaching to the choir, not because they lack confidence or effort, but because their potential remains largely untapped. However, the ever-evolving RVT role presents many possibilities, allowing these professionals to dive into their work with passion and finesse, ultimately validating their years of education and training.

BC RVTs are not currently regulated and do not currently have a scope of practice, which means that the only guidelines available for animal care facilities employing RVTs are the CVBC bylaws, specifically Part 4, Division 4.7: Delegation and Supervision. This bylaw provides some structure for what tasks can be delegated to “anyone deemed capable” under the three levels of supervision: direct, direct personal, and indirect. Veterinarians must not delegate responsibilities that leave them open to liability. The bylaw above does not, however, provide a comprehensive list of what an RVT is capable of with additional support and training.

At the 2023 BCVTA Fall Conference, Alberta RVT Becky Taylor, co-owner of BS Communications, delivered a presentation titled “Goodbye Utilization, Hello Mobilization!” In her lecture, Taylor proposed a shift toward strength-based teams within veterinary practices, emphasizing that not all RVTs possess identical skills or interests. She advocated for embracing individual strengths rather than adhering to a one-size-fits-all RVT job description.

The ABVMA, for example, provides a comprehensive list of skills deemed delegable to an RVT with associated guidelines to ensure appropriate task delegation. Similarly, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) recently released “Veterinary Technician Utilization Guidelines,” a resource that offers insights into maximizing the potential of talented veterinary professionals.

Taking a closer look at the tasks performed by RVTs in your practice, you might discover opportunities for expansion that fall within those permitted by CVBC bylaws. Veterinary technology students graduate with a diverse skill set and are capable of immediately performing a wide range of tasks. Over time, many RVTs develop preferences for specific areas, and actively seek opportunities for professional growth to practise advanced skills. Help support them so they can develop in areas that will benefit your patients, clients, and practice.

By recognizing the unique skills and interests of RVTs and actively supporting their professional development, animal care facilities can enhance the quality of care provided to patients, strengthen client satisfaction, and optimize overall practice

efficiency. Embracing a strength-based approach allows for tailored utilization of RVTs' abilities, ultimately benefiting both the practice and its stakeholders, and providing practices with the opportunity to empower their RVTs and foster a culture of continuous improvement. **WCV**

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*Amber Gregg, RVT, is the executive director and past president of the BCVTA. She graduated from the Thompson Rivers University 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.*