



March 20, 2018

The Honorable Brian Hill  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High St., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: HB 501- Change title of veterinary technician to veterinary nurse

Chairman Hill, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Patterson, and members of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. Thank you for allowing me to be here today. My name is Brian Burger. I am the President of the Ohio Nurses Association and I am an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse who until recently, has spent the last ten years at the bedside as a Registered Nurse. I am here today to testify on behalf of our association regarding the designation of a Veterinary Nurse in the Ohio Revised Code.

The Ohio Nurses Association (ONA) has been engaged with the Veterinary Nurse Initiative coalition through the American Nurses Association (ANA) to garner a better understanding of the desire to standardize and increase the education and training of Veterinary Technicians under a single credential. Additionally, a member of the Coalition spoke to us, as well as 34 other state nursing association representatives at an ANA sponsored meeting back in September. While we commend the North American Veterinary Technician Association's (NAVTA) desire to standardize Technicians, we do not support the use of the title "nurse" for this role, nor do we support the designation of a Veterinary Nurse in the Revised Code.

The title "nurse" has always been linked to the care of humans—And prior to 1903, anyone could call themselves a nurse and practice nursing in the United States. Moreover, nurses in Ohio formed ONA in 1904 so we would have a powerful platform for the protection, promotion and advancement of our profession, beginning with Ohio's Nurse Practice Act. Nurses have worked for decades to ensure the public understands the education and training we receive, and our efforts have been validated through the Gallop poll as being recognized as the most ethical and trusted profession 16-years in a row. For over one-hundred years, nurses have fought to establish standards of practice and licensure. Through these regulatory efforts, the nursing profession has protected the public and nurses' credibility. Furthermore, licensure through state statutes limit the use of the title "registered nurse" and "licensed practical nurse". Specifically, in the Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4723.1:

- (A) "Registered nurse" means an individual who holds a current, valid license issued under this chapter that authorizes the practice of nursing as a registered nurse.

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The Recognized Leader and Advocate for Professional Nursing in Ohio

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Furthermore, immediately defining the term “registered nurse”, the Ohio Revised Code states:

- (B) "Practice of nursing as a registered nurse" means providing to individuals and groups nursing care requiring specialized knowledge, judgment, and skill derived from the principles of biological, physical, behavioral, social, and nursing sciences. Such nursing care includes:
- (1) Identifying patterns of **human** responses to actual or potential health problems amenable to a nursing regimen;
  - (2) Executing a nursing regimen through the selection, performance, management, and evaluation of nursing actions;
  - (3) Assessing health status for the purpose of providing nursing care;
  - (4) Providing health counseling and health teaching;
  - (5) Administering medications, treatments, and executing regimens authorized by an individual who is authorized to practice in this state and is acting within the course of the individual's professional practice;
  - (6) Teaching, administering, supervising, delegating, and evaluating nursing practice.

Additionally, 4723.03 of the Revised Code discusses unlicensed practice:

- (A) No person shall engage in the practice of nursing as a registered nurse, represent the person as being a registered nurse, or use the title "registered nurse," the initials "R.N.," or any other title implying that the person is a registered nurse, for a fee, salary, or other consideration, or as a volunteer, without holding a current, valid license as a registered nurse under this chapter.
- (D) No person shall engage in the practice of nursing as a licensed practical nurse, represent the person as being a licensed practical nurse, or use the title "licensed practical nurse," the initials "L.P.N.," or any other title implying that the person is a licensed practical nurse, for a fee, salary, or other consideration, or as a volunteer, without holding a current, valid license as a practical nurse under this chapter.
- (E) No person shall use the titles or initials "graduate nurse," "G.N.," "professional nurse," "P.N.," "graduate practical nurse," "G.P.N.," "practical nurse," "P.N.," "trained nurse," "T.N.," or any other statement, title, or initials that would imply or represent to the public that the person is authorized to practice nursing in this state, except as follows:
- (1) A person licensed under this chapter to practice nursing as a registered nurse may use that title and the initials "R.N.";



(2) A person licensed under this chapter to practice nursing as a licensed practical nurse may use that title and the initials "L.P.N."

Our association believes that the definitions explicitly defined in ORC 4723 protect the practice of nursing, much like language in ORC 4741 protect the practice of veterinary medicine and its branches, such as registered veterinary technicians.

Changing the title of veterinary technician to veterinary nurse would undermine title protections and the "practice of nursing" that have been secured through Ohio's state statute. We strongly believe that NAVTA should seek national standardized credentials using Ohio's registered veterinary technician language as a model for other states who need updating without using the title "nurse" or the like. We welcome the opportunity to work with NAVTA to find a title that best suits the credentialing and educational preparation of veterinary technicians. Perhaps the title "veterinary practitioner" would offer a solution to title confusion, without using another profession's well-established title. From ONA's perspective, it would appear that credential standardization using the title registered veterinary technician or a new title like "veterinary practitioner" would expedite this change, rather than attempting to change all 50 state statutes. Justifiably so, the Tennessee legislature feels the same. Just last week the Tennessee Senate Agriculture Committee voted to take NAVTA's model "veterinary nurse" bill off notice, which essentially killed the bill in their current legislative session.

We can certainly sympathize with the veterinary technicians and commend any attempt to raise education and practice standards, however this national initiative will continue to run into road blocks where the title "nurse", "registered nurse" and "nursing" are protected under various state statutes. In fact, at last 39 states protect the title "nurse" in statute, which supports ONA's argument for veterinary technicians to utilize a different title other than "nurse". Moreover, we believe that trying to change multiple state statutes does not solve the overarching problem of public awareness, as stated to be the problem in proponent testimony. It is ONA's belief that perhaps NAVTA should focus their efforts toward a public education and awareness campaign and focus their time on states who are identified as needing updates to educational standards and credentialing.

We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BJB", written over a horizontal line.

Brian J. Burger MSN, APRN, AGACNP-BC, CCRN  
President, Ohio Nurses Association

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