



## National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIE LEGRED, CVT



Since 2013, the **National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America** (NAVTA; [navta.net](http://navta.net)) and the **North American Veterinary Community** (NAVC; [navc.com](http://navc.com)) have partnered to emphasize the critical role veterinary technicians play in animal health care. Facilitating this partnership is NAVTA Executive Director **Julie Legred, CVT**, who also fills the shoes of Senior Manager of Veterinary Technician Programs for NAVC. Here she shares what it's like to handle both busy roles, and what members can look forward to in 2015.

### Tell me about your role at NAVTA. How did you become Executive Director of this organization?

Since 2005, I have served in several positions for NAVTA, including President Elect and President. At the end of 2012, the Board of Directors decided to change the leadership structure, so they asked Kara Burns, LVT, and me to act as Interim Communications Director and Executive Director, respectively, while NAVTA underwent some reorganizing. NAVC approached NAVTA in February 2013 to look at the possibility of partnering, which launched many discussions about what this partnership might look like.

With NAVTA needing help in their day-to-day administrative activities and NAVC wanting input and expertise regarding upcoming projects and strategies for veterinary technicians, we signed an agreement in November 2013. When NAVC and NAVTA underwent a search for an Executive Director and Senior Manager of Veterinary Technician Programs rolled into one, I was honored to be one of the finalists from a pool of over 100 applicants. I started the dual position in January 2014.

As NAVTA's Executive Director—and as their only paid employee—I do many things! I process memberships and merchandise orders, answer phones, manage five email accounts, talk to sponsors, and facilitate partnerships through webinars, continuing education (CE) events, and various initiatives. But that's not all! I work with conferences to hold events and maintain a booth presence, as well as create and offer NAVTA tracks. I pay bills, invoice ad sales for the journal and newsletter, and travel extensively to represent technicians at a variety of industry conferences,

summits, and meetings. Creating newsletters and eblasts and managing the Facebook page are also part of my job. While Kara Burns and Heather Prendergast are Editor in Chief and CE Editor, respectively, of *The NAVTA Journal*, I enjoy being part of the journal production process. There's quite a bit more, and then there are my additional duties for NAVC. Yet, I couldn't be more thrilled to be a driving part of these important organizations.

### How does NAVTA hope to reach out and provide resources to its members in 2015?

Our big initiative for 2015 is a new database/website. We are hoping this new system will be in place by the first quarter of 2015 at the very latest. The new database will have many new features unavailable with our current system and will allow our members to access their own profiles to make changes and look up usernames and passwords. It will also streamline the online application process and make it more efficient.

We have had, and will continue to have, many resources for our members, but in 2015, we are hoping to better publicize our current resources, make them more user friendly, and enhance what we provide.

### This past year, you launched a CE course, partnering with Merial, on heartworm prevention. How have partnerships like this benefitted your members?

Really, this partnership has just begun! This relationship has affected not only our members, but also many of the dogs and cats our members and all veterinary technicians interact with on a daily basis in their practices. Merial and NAVTA have two main goals for this partnership: The first is to make a differ-

ence in the number of dogs and cats we protect from heartworm disease by educating owners and making them aware of the importance of year-round heartworm prevention. The second is to elevate the role of the veterinary technician, because he or she plays a critical role in educating clients and working with the veterinarian to reinforce heartworm prevention recommendations. Merial and NAVTA want to build awareness of the importance of technicians in these roles, and empower them by doing so.

In this partnership, we are providing online CE courses on how to effectively communicate the message, as well as bringing in-person CE courses to technicians on heartworm topics at many of the national conferences. In addition, we have already sponsored special events with heartworm as a focal point at conferences, including the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) Convention, NAVC Conference, and Western Veterinary Conference (WVC). During National Veterinary Technician Week, Merial generously offered to cover membership for 200 technicians. The buzz escalated quickly, and they paid for over 5000 memberships for technicians. This is evidence of their commitment to elevating the veterinary technician profession.

NAVTA is fortunate to have many great sponsors and supporters. Without them, we would not be able to provide many of the valuable resources we provide today and in the future. We value each and every one of them.

#### **What NAVTA initiatives for 2015 are you most excited about?**

In my position, new opportunities pop up every day, but the things that come to mind immediately are the Merial partnership, our relationship with Hill's Pet Nutrition, and the 2015 initiatives coming into play. These include our part in the "Fear Free" initiative with "America's Veterinarian" Dr. Marty Becker, our reinvigorated state representative committee and network, and our efforts to improve the NAVTA day-to-day activities and work on new projects with NAVC. I'm also excited about our involvement with many conferences, especially the new WVC Veterinary Technician Symposium in June 2015 as well as our initiatives with AVMA to bring many educational opportunities to technicians, veterinarians, and practices. Really, I just cannot name everything in the works that we are hoping to realize over the next few years! I believe it's important that the rest of our profession see what we do behind the scenes for veterinary technicians every day of the year! ■