

## Mid-Level Practitioner Position

*(Updated June 2026)*

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) acknowledges the ongoing discussion about creating a mid-level practitioner role in shelter, community, and clinical veterinary medicine, as a potential response to the access to care crisis. The ASV is committed to expanding access to veterinary care and recognizes the significant, multifactorial barriers faced by animals, their caretakers, and shelters in underserved communities. However, the ASV believes that the most effective and responsible approach is to strengthen and expand proven, evidence-based pathways within the veterinary workforce. These include maximizing utilization of veterinary technicians and support staff through enhanced training and career development, expanding telemedicine where appropriate, and supporting incentives that improve recruitment and retention in rural and underserved areas. While the ASV supports thoughtful innovation that improves access to care, we believe current efforts should remain focused on advancing these established and often underutilized strategies as the profession continues to evaluate emerging care models and their potential role in veterinary medicine.

The ASV has reviewed current mid-level practitioner proposals and identified important questions regarding education and competency, legal and regulatory consistency, supervision and professional responsibility, and the extent to which these models will improve access to care while maintaining quality and patient safety. Shelter and community medicine require specialized expertise in population health, infectious disease management, triage, and high-volume surgical care. The ASV is concerned that the abbreviated or primarily online training pathways proposed to date have not yet demonstrated preparation in these areas comparable to the demands of shelter practice. Proposed scopes of practice that include surgery also warrant careful consideration, given their implications for patient safety, clinical outcomes, and the responsibilities of supervising veterinarians. In addition, variation among state veterinary practice acts may limit the implementation and applicability of these models in shelters and other community practice settings.

The ASV remains committed to advancing evidence-based solutions that expand access to high-quality veterinary care for shelter animals and underserved communities. We encourage continued investment in and full utilization of proven strategies,

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including those outlined above, while fostering collaboration across the diverse perspectives represented within the animal welfare and veterinary communities. The ASV believes that sustainable solutions to the access-to-care challenge will be achieved through broad engagement, shared expertise, and thoughtful partnership across sectors. We also support the continued evaluation of emerging models of care and are committed to revisiting our position as new evidence becomes available. Future consideration of mid-level practitioner models should be guided by clearly defined, shelter-appropriate scopes of practice, rigorous education and credentialing standards, and thoroughly demonstrated evidence of patient safety, clinical competency, and meaningful improvements in access to veterinary care.

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