

# Professor leads push for greater recognition of veterinary technicians

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*Top photo: Kirsti Clarida, Professor, School of Health Sciences (second from right) with Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Minister Lisa Thompson (centre) and other animal care leaders. (Photo courtesy Kirsti Clarida)*

The Ontario government is working to recognize the importance of veterinary technicians more strongly than ever before – and Kirsti Clarida couldn't be any happier about it.

"I still shake my head that this is actually happening," said Ms. Clarida, who is both a professor in the School of Health Sciences and the past president of the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians (OAVT).

Ms. Clarida has long been an advocate for legislation like the [Enhancing Professional Care for Animals Act](#), which Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Minister Lisa Thompson introduced last month.

The new bill aims to improve veterinary care in the province by creating the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario, replacing the current College of Veterinarians of Ontario. This change officially recognizes both veterinarians and veterinary technicians and the crucial role each has in caring for animals.

"It's the right model for animal welfare and access to care. It's the right model for veterinary teams and the mental health of the industry. It's the right model for moving forward," said Ms. Clarida.

The legislation will also expand the scope of practice for RVTs, allowing them to make full use of their education and training, and formalize for the first time that RVTs are professionals with unique skill sets. The tireless advocacy of Ms. Clarida and the OAVT were recognized as a key driver of these changes.

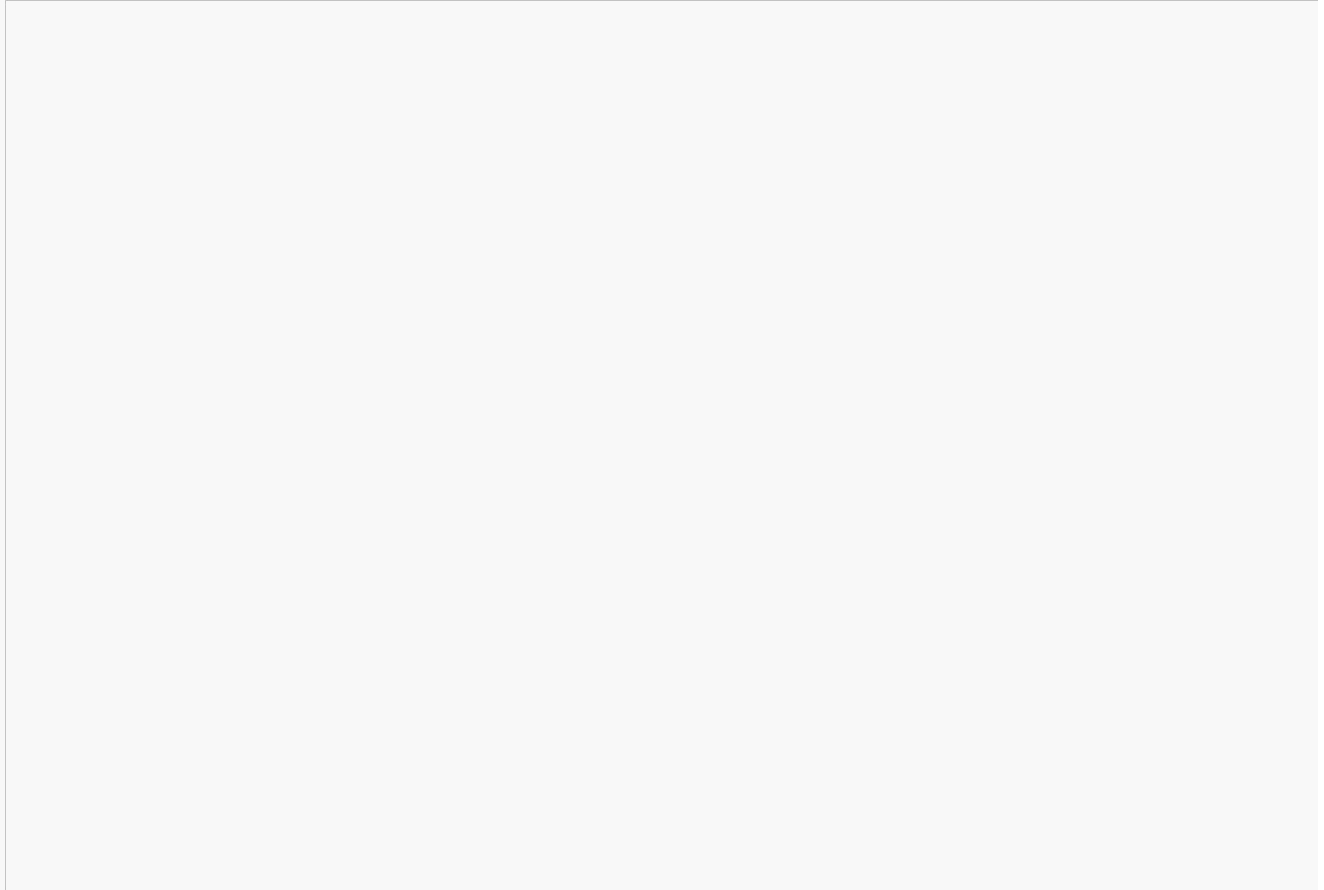
"I haven't stopped for 17 years," said Ms. Clarida. "I felt like the previous legislation was limiting the way that RVTs could work – and I wasn't the only one. There was a very long line of RVTs before me that felt the same."

That long line stretches back for decades; former Seneca professor Marg Brown was heavily involved in pushing for greater recognition of RVTs in the early 1990s. But it's another long line that has Ms. Clarida especially excited – the one comprising all the future RVTs who will benefit from this new legislation.

Included in that group are current students Elizabeth Crouchman and Joner Kuo, who were invited to

Queen's Park to witness the government's announcement and the introduction of the bill. Interviews with Ms. Clarida and Mr. Kuo were even included in a **government video** promoting the announcement.

"Elizabeth and Joner were able to watch the bill be carried across the floor and understand how important that day was," said Ms. Clarida. "I cried because this changes my world, but for them – they're going to walk into a totally new world where opportunities that never existed before are suddenly wide open."



*Students Joner Kuo (left) and Elizabeth Crouchman (right) with Minister Thompson at Queen's Park. (Photo courtesy Kirsti Clarida)*

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