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## **Support the Creation of a Veterinary Professional Associate (Vet PA)**

### **The Problem**

A critical labor shortage in the veterinary field is impacting the ability of pet owners and agricultural producers to access veterinary care for their animals. By creating a mid-level veterinary provider, also known as a veterinary professional associate or Vet “PA”, we can increase workforce capacity and drive down costs to ensure more animals receive the care they need and deserve. Top veterinary schools like Colorado State University are already developing master’s degree programs for Vet PAs, however, the state needs to create a career-pathway for these professionals to be able to practice and provide veterinary care.

- Colorado has 25 counties that are USDA-designated veterinary shortage areas, and an estimated 1/3 of pet owners face significant barriers to obtaining veterinary care.
- Creating a mid-level provider will add to the veterinary workforce, decreasing costs and making it easier for pet owners across the state to access veterinary care.
- According to a 2023 survey of Colorado pet owners, 80% said they would be comfortable with a Vet PA seeing their pet.

### ***What is a veterinary professional associate (Vet PA)?***

Like a physician assistant in human medicine, a Vet PA is a master’s degree-level professional who works under the supervision of a Colorado licensed veterinarian to provide care such as examining pets, diagnosing minor conditions, performing routine surgeries, and leading healthcare teams.

### **The Solution**

Ballot initiative #145 will improve access to veterinary care by increasing workforce capacity and increasing the number of animals who can get the veterinary care they need and deserve. By signing the petition on Initiative #145, Coloradans can use their voice to help ensure that all animals can access and afford high-quality veterinary care.

### **Supporters**

Initiative #145 is supported by the Veterinary Care Coalition, an expanding alliance of animal welfare organizations, veterinarians and technicians, pet owners, ranchers, and other experts with a common goal to find innovative solutions to the state’s veterinary workforce shortage.

The list of coalition members can be found here: <https://www.vetcarecoalition.com/endorsement>