

Position Statement: A Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia (DACVAA) is a Veterinary Anesthesia Specialist

On behalf of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia (ACVAA), the ACVAA Board of Directors would like to issue a position statement regarding the training process and role of board-certified veterinary anesthesiologists in order to clarify the contribution that such an individual can make to veterinary patient care.

In order to become an ACVAA diplomate, an individual must possess a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM/VMD or foreign equivalent) degree, have undergone residency training in the field of anesthesia and analgesia after receiving their doctorate degree in veterinary medicine, and have passed the ACVAA certifying examination. A veterinarian must qualify for residency training and be accepted into a residency program that is recognized by the ACVAA. The residency consists of 3 years of intensive training in anesthesia and analgesia under the direct supervision of diplomates of the ACVAA. Near, or at, the completion of these 3 years, a resident in training must submit credentials in order to be allowed to take the ACVAA board certification examination. This examination is a rigorous test in all aspects of veterinary anesthesia and analgesia, including anatomy, physiology, pharmacology of anesthetic drugs, anesthesia equipment, and specific management of veterinary species, including wild, zoo, companion, and food and fiber animal species. After successfully passing this examination, a veterinarian becomes a diplomate of the ACVAA and is considered a veterinary anesthesiologist.

How can an ACVAA diplomate contribute to veterinary care of your animal/patient?

A veterinary anesthesiologist's role in patient care extends beyond simply prescribing anesthetic drugs. Prior to anesthesia, a diplomate evaluates the animal's physical condition and any disease that may negatively impact the animal's response to anesthesia. They may prescribe (or guide) treatment to help stabilize the patient and to increase peri-anesthetic safety of the patient. Additionally they manage all aspects of peri-procedural pain, monitor, diagnose, and treat anesthetic-related complications that may arise and keep a legal record of the same. In addition to expertise in managing acute pain, many veterinary anesthesiologists can also make educated recommendations and/or provide treatment for chronic pain. They also provide consultation for veterinarians, who are not experts in anesthesia, regarding anesthesia or analgesia care of individual patients.