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VACC staff talk to conference attendees as they visit the VACC booth at the Association for Vascular Access' 2022 Scientific Meeting.

## Letter from the President

It has been a busy year for the Vascular Access Certification Corporation board, and even busier for you, our certificants. As conferences around the country have turned to hybrid attendance options (both live and virtual attendance), we have been able to meet VA-BC™s again with a handshake, elbow bump, or a friendly wave. The VACC staff and board members have travelled to three conferences this year to meet our certificants and spread our mission, with audiences ranging from critical care nurses to respiratory therapists.

We were ecstatic to see so many VA-BC™s, new and returning, show up for vascular access and for their community at the Association for Vascular Access Scientific Meeting this fall. We brought along plenty of giveaway items (stress hearts, anyone?), and current certificants could spin the wheel to get a free item from our store. Some stayed to chat, and others swung by between sessions or a bite to eat.

No matter where we are, we've seen you learning more about your specialty, volunteering your time, and protecting the patient. And we, VACC Board of Directors and staff, are reminded that you are why we do this.

As part of VACC's new strategic plan (2023-2025), our goal is to further root the credential in evidence-based practice and increase our marketing efforts for the VA-BC™. By making the credential more visible and valuable, we aim to boost the value of certified professionals within their institutions, and above all, protect each person who will need a vascular access device in the course of their care. As we begin work on this plan, we will open opportunities for certificants to help us make their credential better and brighter.

We would not be where we are today without you, and so our mission is the same as it has always been: to protect patients and promote vascular access professionals through an accredited certification in our specialty.

Cheers to three full years of growth in vascular access!

- Leigh Ann Bowe-Geddes ■

*Leigh Ann Bowe-Geddes, MSN, RN, VA-BC*

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## Celebrating Certificants, Current and Future

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The VACC board and staff would like to extend our congratulations to our newest certificants who passed the June 2022 VA-BC™ exam!

During the June 2022 cycle, 432 VA-BC™s successfully recertified from June 2019, and 317 candidates passed the VA-BC™ exam for initial certification. Our passing rate for the exam was 87%.

As you're reading this issue, we're about halfway through our December testing window. An amazing 501 clinicians were approved to sit for their exam this month. Additionally, 465 dedicated VA-BC™s have turned in their applications for December 2022 recertification by CE.

Thank you all for showing your dedication to your patients who need vascular access through board certification! ■

Interested in seeing more of the VACC calendar? We've listed a few dates below to highlight what we're looking forward to next year.

- Jan. 10:** December 2022 passing test takers receive digital badges to their emails
- Jan. 25:** National IV Nurse Day
- February:** Black History Month
- Feb. 28:** Grace period ends for late December 2022 recertification by CE applications
- March:** VA-BC™ webinar for June exam and recertification
- March 1:** June 2023 VA-BC™ exam registration opens
- March 19:** Certified Nurses Day
- March 20:** Early registration for June 2023 exam and recertification by CE ends
- April 15:** Final registration for June 2023 exam ends
- May:** Mental Health Month
- June:** Pride Month
- June 1:** First day of testing
- June 1:** Recertification by CE applications due



# Vascular Access: The World's Best Kept Secret?

When Turena Reeves, BSN, RN, VA-BC™, applied for a job as a vascular access nurse in the 1970s, she thought it would be an easy job while she raised her kids. After all, she thought, what is so difficult about getting a call, inserting a line, and leaving the room?

“How wrong I was,” she laughs.

Now, Reeves can't imagine herself doing anything else. She currently works as a Clinical Educator of Vascular Access at Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, PA. It is a new role, and Reeves secured it from her years of passion for all aspects of vascular access: education, research, technology, and the bedside.

But to get where she is now, she needed to learn a thing or two about the specialty. As part of her orientation in her first role as a vascular access nurse, she had to study a textbook on infusion therapy.

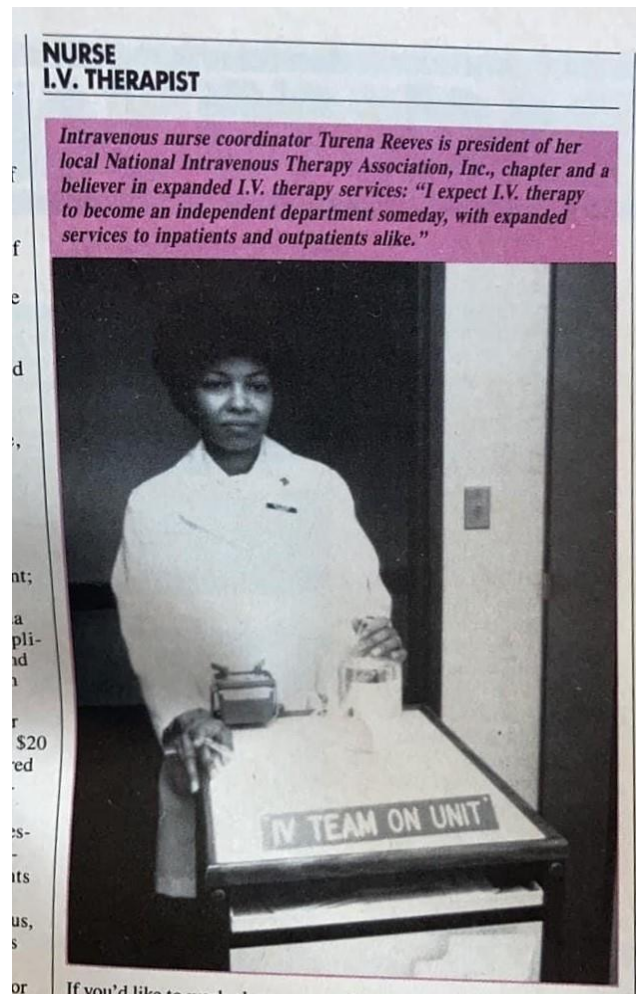
“It was that book that made me realize how much I didn't know, how much I didn't understand,” she said. And she was eager to fill in the gaps in her knowledge.

Within her first years on the job, she attended her first Infusion Nurses Society meeting. It was an immediate game-changer for Reeves.

“I could see the support systems in place with others who had the same vision and concerns that I did. It was exposure on the national level that helped solidify that this was real.”

She dove into vascular access headfirst. Surrounded by the new ideas, research, and colleagues with the same drive as herself, she channeled her passion into creating better outcomes for the patient. And she could not do it alone. She became an advocate for vascular access in local chapters of specialty organizations and within her own institution.

***“It couldn't just be me, one voice, that could affect change. This knowledge...it can't be the world's best kept secret.”***



Turena Reeves, BSN, RN, VA-BC™, featured in the July/August 1981 issue of *Nursing Life* for her role as an IV nurse.

“It couldn't just be me, one voice, that could affect change,” Reeves said. “This knowledge... it can't be the world's best kept secret.”

Her job now as a Clinical Educator is all about transferring this knowledge to others for the patient's benefit. She responds to calls from the intensive care units and other departments where rapid and sound decision-making is crucial. By collaborating with the staff, she can help determine the best care strategy and outcome for the patient.

Her time on the floor allows her to see the

trends in health care. New technologies, changes in clinical practices or medication uses, and infection prevention updates all get translated to the classroom as the other part of Reeves's title.

After nearly 50 years in the business, Reeves has seen vascular access come a long way. In 1981, she was interviewed for the publication *Nursing Life* about the state of IV therapy as a practice. She predicted that one day, the specialty would have its own department.

"I can see it on the horizon," Reeves said. "It's going to take a bit of work."

To get to that level of recognition for vascular access, Reeves suggested five things:

1. **Be adaptable.** Health care is ever-changing, Reeves said, and staying flexible while working with your organization's stakeholders—like board officials, executives, and so on—is key to achieving your goals.
2. **Understand where your organization is headed.** Again, Reeves mentions to talk with your institution's stakeholders to understand what they want, where they see the organization growing, and where it needs work so that you can be the one to help make that happen—and you can be the one to make space for vascular access in that future.
3. **Think outside the box.** Reeves asks readers to not only live by this mindset but to push it one step further: "Outside the box – what box?"
4. **Focus on your passion.** She adopts a mission statement for her practice focused on improving patient outcomes. She advises others to do the same. "Each of us needs to have a mission statement that represents our beliefs – never waiver from that belief."
5. **Continue learning.** As a strong believer that one should be the expert in their field, Reeves keeps up with her vascular access network to stay connected to the latest research. She can then use this research to state her case with authority, whether it is weighing in on patient care or talking with stakeholders. "You can do that with quality improvement tools and data...But it's not just volume driven. It's not about how many PICC lines you put in. It's about the outcome of the patient with the PICC line."



Turena Reeves for Einstein Healthcare Network. Photo provided by Turena Reeves.

Reeves passes on one more piece of advice to expert clinicians like her. It's timely guidance, as the health care industry sees the retirement of seasoned clinicians. She urges retirees to pass on the knowledge gained from years of experience to their fellow professionals, whether they have been practicing for 5 months or 15 years.

After all, it was the passion passed down from her superiors that ignited her own love for the specialty.

"I can't tell you how many times I do on the spot huddles in the nurses' station and the 15-year nurse will say 'I never knew that.' That's OK! Let's talk about it," she said. "Leave it behind so that others can develop that passion, understanding, and awareness." ■

# Vascular Access Nurse Writes Book for Pediatric Patients

In early 2020, Jackie Lutes, BSN, RN, CPN, VA-BC™, took up her pen and wrote a children's booklet to make getting a vascular access device easier for her pediatric patients.

While working the evening shifts on her vascular access team, Jackie Lutes noticed that not all pediatric patients had the same experience when it came to establishing a line. The patients who came in during the day had a child life specialist present during their procedure to explain the steps and give them comfort. With the child life specialists gone for the day, Lutes looked for ways to make the procedure more manageable for her evening patients.

She decided to get creative. Inspired by an article showing how one hospital used dogs to show children what their care would look like, Lutes fetched her camera, grabbed her dog, and got to work.

The result was a story about a dog getting an IV for the first time. Titled "Porter Gets an IV," the booklet stars Lutes's pup, Porter, garbed in a patient gown and, in later pages, fixed with the device.

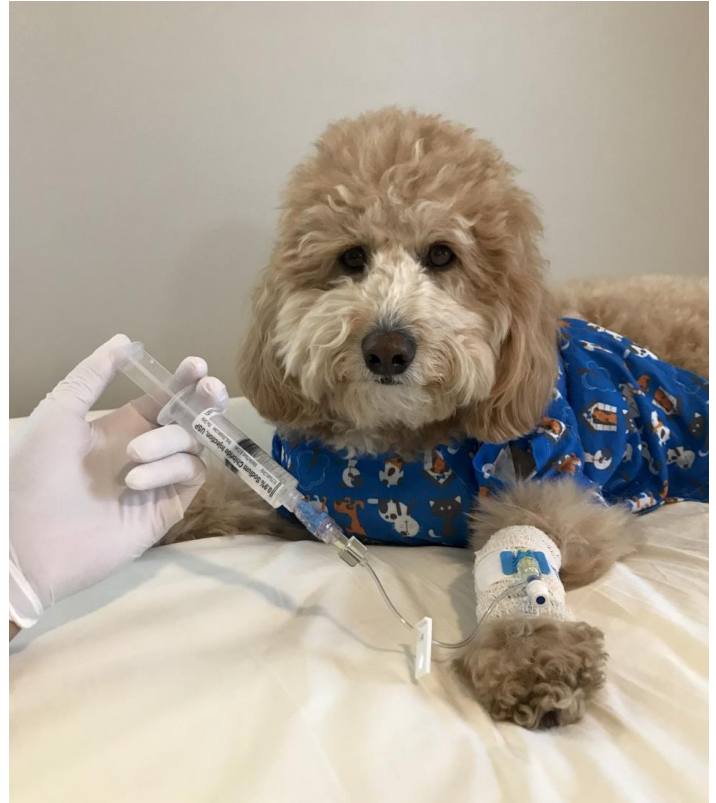
The book is an instant de-stressor, Lutes said. It eases the tension for the children to see the process laid out clearly. Add a dog who is dressed just like them, and the process goes from scary and intimidating, to silly and approachable.

She said some patients break into big smiles and tell stories about their dog at home.

"When they flip through the book, they think that maybe this isn't so bad," she said.

Lutes wanted the book to not only soothe nerves but to be educational too. Lutes worked with a child life specialist in her institution to tackle the questions that most kids have when getting a device for the first time.

"Kids want to know everything," Lutes said. "Like 'why are you wearing those gloves,' 'what are you



Jackie Lutes's dog Porter modeling IV insertion for a children's educational booklet created by Lutes. *Photo provided by Jackie Lutes.*

going to do with that wipe,' or 'how does it go in my arm?'

The book is fitted in a binder with each page laminated for easy disinfection. Tucked into the inside pocket is a kit filled with the parts of an IV, so tactile learners can feel the catheter before the procedure starts.

The binder is also big enough to act as a shield between the patient and the device.

"It's a big enough book where you can hold it off to the side if the kid doesn't want to watch the poke."

The seemingly small booklet made a huge difference. Parents can even benefit from the book by reading it with their child as the team prepares for the procedure.

“It was a bonding moment for the parent and the kid,” Lutes described. “Sometimes it’s easier for the kid to hear things from their parent versus strangers who they know are going to poke them. They’ve gotten pokes in the past—it hurts.”

Porter was no worse for the wear after his modeling gig. In fact, Lutes said her dog is so easy-going, that the hardest part about taking the pictures for the booklet was making sure he didn’t fall asleep.

“I did have to give him some cheese because that’s his favorite treat,” she laughed.

Porter is now a therapy dog, thanks to Lutes’s training, and the two use his laid-back attitude to visit those who need them. The duo currently visits nursing homes with their free time. They also volunteer with a therapy group called Canine Inspired Change, where therapy dogs visit schools and other organizations to help community members with trauma, social struggles, and isolation.

Porter in a patient gown demonstrating the use of a wipe for the IV insertion. *Photo provided by Jackie Lutes.*



**“Sometimes people are really quick to want to just get the IV in, not really take the time for all the little things...We’re trying to make it a more positive experience every single time a kid gets an IV start.”**

After two years of residing in the office of the vascular access team, Lutes believes it is time for the story to spread its wings. She is currently working with the vascular access council and the child life department to duplicate the book. That way, children throughout the institution – inpatient or outpatient – can feel comfortable with their care.

“Sometimes people are really quick to want to just get the IV in, not really take the time for all the little things,” Lutes said. “We’re trying to make it a more positive experience every single time a kid gets an IV start.” ■

# Keep in Mind

If you need a reminder on when you are due to recertify, our timeline below should give you a quick glance. Remember that recertification by CE applications open 10 months prior to when applications are due. For more information on dates and fees, please [visit our website](#).

VA-BC™ Attained	VA-BC™ Expires	VA-BC™ Renewal Documents and Fees Due Date
December 2022	December 31, 2025	December 1, 2025
June 2022	June 30, 2025	June 1, 2025
December 2021	December 31, 2024	December 1, 2024
June 2021	June 30, 2024	June 1, 2024
December 2020	December 31, 2023	December 1, 2023
June 2020	June 30, 2023	June 1, 2023
December 2019	December 31, 2022	December 1, 2022

## Not sure where to start with your VA-BC™ journey?

Take a look at our [Certification Toolkit](#) if you want to show your dedication to vascular access by taking the exam, or dive into our [Recertification Toolkit](#) if you're looking to renew your credential and your commitment to vascular access.

*We like to hear from you! Remember to keep your information updated with VACC so we can reach you with any questions, concerns, or announcements. Log into the [Certificant Portal](#) and click the "My Profile" button to confirm that your information is right.*

## Visit the VA-BC™ Store

Wear your VA-BC™ on your sleeve with our VA-BC™ products. From pins to badges, we have what you need to share your achievement. [Shop all things VACC in our online store](#).

## Stay connected with your VA-BC™ community

See what other VA-BC™s are accomplishing and celebrate together, get reminders on deadlines, and find updates on all things VA-BC™ on VACC social media. Ready to join the conversation?



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