



# Licking Memorial Health Systems

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## Service Animals/Animal Assistants, Therapy Animals and Pet Visitation

### Policy

The emotional and physical benefits derived from the human-animal bond are well recognized. The therapeutic value of animal visitation in institutional settings is often reported. At times when there is a request by a patient or a family to allow the visitation of a pet, Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) will allow visits from **dogs** or **cats** if and only if the risk of infection transmission can be kept to a minimum. The dog or cat must be healthy and of good disposition. Animals other than those listed above will not be allowed to visit due to a risk of enteric disease (turtles, iguanas etc.) or behavioral issues (ferrets etc.).

Service Animals will be permitted to accompany persons within LMHS facilities in compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Animal Assistants will be permitted to accompany persons within LMHS facilities in compliance with Ohio law.

### Definitions

**Animal Assistant** - Under Ohio Administrative Code 4112-4-02, an animal assistant is defined as any animal which aids the disabled. Specific examples include: (1) A dog which alerts a hearing impaired person to sounds; (2) A dog which guides a visually impaired person; and (3) A monkey which collects or retrieves items for a person whose mobility is impaired.

**Handler** - May be either the person with disabilities who has a Service Animal or the trained person who brings an animal for animal-assisted intervention or the visitor bringing in a pet.

**Pet** - Animal owned by a patient or patient's family as an object of affection for personal companionship.

**Service Animal<sup>1</sup>** - Under the ADA, a Service Animal is defined as any dog that has been individually trained to assist a person with a disability with one or more daily activities. These activities include mobility, sensory, sound alert, seizure alert, and preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. It does not include providing emotional support, comfort, or companionship. The Service Animal works for the person with disabilities and usually has little, if any contact with others. Service Animals are not considered pets.

**Therapy Animal** -

### Procedure

## **Minimum Infection Control Guidelines for All Animals**

1. All patients, visitors, and health care workers should practice hand hygiene both before and after each animal contact.
2. Animals must be groomed, clean, and in good health and have a good disposition.
3. Animals must be on a non-retractable leash, harnessed, tethered or caged and in control by the Handler at all times.
4. Any animal spills should be immediately cleaned up by the Handler, while wearing gloves, and discarded appropriately in a toilet or by placing in a plastic bag before being placed into a trash receptacle. Hand hygiene should be performed immediately after disposing of waste and removing gloves. Environmental Services or another designated responsible individual should be notified immediately to disinfect the area. The Handler should take appropriate measures to prevent recurrence during future visits.
5. Any animal bites or scratches that occur during the visit must be reported via occurrence report and to the Manager or on-duty Supervisor for appropriate follow up, including but not limited to, mandated reporting to the Licking County Health Department and care/treatment of the bite and/or scratch.
6. When possible, hospitalized patients will be in private rooms or alone in a double room. If a roommate is to be present, the roommate should be screened for allergy and for phobia by nursing personnel.

## **Service Animals and Animal Assistants**

1. The use of a Service Animal or Animal Assistant by a person with a disability will not be restricted within LMHS unless: (1) the Service Animal or Animal Assistant is out of control and the Handler does not take effective action to control it or (2) the Service Animal or Animal Assistant is not housebroken.
2. When it is not obvious what service a Service Animal or Animal Assistant provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may only ask two questions: (1) is the animal a Service Animal or Animal Assistant required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the Service Animal or Animal Assistant, or ask that the Service Animal or Animal Assistant demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.
3. It is the responsibility of the Handler) to provide for the care of the Service Animal or Animal Assistant while on the premises. If separation of the Handler and the Service Animal or Animal Assistant is anticipated, alternative care must be arranged for the animal to be walked, fed, and otherwise cared for. In the rare case that the patient cannot procure such care for the Service Animal or Animal Assistant for the duration of his/her stay, staff will make appropriate arrangements to board or otherwise care for the animal at the patient's expense.
4. Generally, Service Animals and Animal Assistants are allowed to accompany the patient with a disability in all areas of LMHS where the public is normally allowed to go. However, in order to maintain a sterile environment, Service Animals and Animal Assistants will be restricted from Surgery areas and any area where isolation precautions are in effect. All other decisions to restrict access will be made on a case by case basis by the Infection Prevention Director

or his/her designee.

5. Service Animals and Animal Assistants may not travel into other patient rooms or otherwise visit other patients, visitors, and staff.
6. Behavioral Health units are locked units, with no visitor lounge and no overnight stays possible. Patients on Behavioral Health units meet criteria for admission based on cognitive impairment leading to danger to themselves or others, and patients are often psychotic, manic or violent with a propensity for unpredictable behavior. Additionally, many patients are unable to care for themselves or the needs of an animal. Accordingly, Service Animals and Animal Assistants are generally not permitted in Behavioral Health units. However, exceptions may be allowed following discussions with the Shepherd Hill Director.
7. If a particular Service Animal or Animal Assistant behaves in a way that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, has a history of such behavior, or is not under the control of the handler, that animal may be excluded. LMHS Police is to be notified prior to excluding a Service Animal or Animal Assistant from LMHS.
8. If the Service Animal or Animal Assistant is properly excluded based on either threat of harm or behavior, staff must provide the individual using the Service Animal or Animal Assistant equal opportunity to obtain the hospital's services and have the tasks performed when the animal is not present.

### **Therapy Animals**

1. Therapy animals that participate in an Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) program are allowed in the hospital and when approved, Shepherd Hill. All required documents shall be given to nurse manager and/or charge nurse and PCC prior to scheduling any visits. The documents required are those considered standard protocol for AAT programs.
2. The therapy animal visit will be pre-arranged with the nurse manager and/or charge nurse or therapy representative.
3. Therapy animals require a Provider's order.
4. Therapy animals will have a photo for ID purposes.
5. Therapy animals will wear their ID tags while on the premises.
6. Proof of liability insurance coverage for the therapy group is required.
7. Therapy animals may visit the patient's room and general areas of the hospital.
8. Therapy animals will not be allowed in restricted areas. These areas include those defined under the Service Animals/Animal Assistants section above.
9. Patients will never be alone with the therapy animal. The handler will be present at all times.
10. Any unusual occurrences will be reported to the nurse manager and/or charge nurse or PCC and an incident report should be completed.
11. Any patients may be referred to the AAT program whose therapy goals may be enhanced by such participation.

### **Any Other Pet Visitation**

1. Pet (dog or cat) visitation by non-Animal Assistants, non-Service Animals, and non-Therapy Animals shall only be allowed within hospital patient rooms only; Pet visitation is not

permitted in any LMHS Physician's Office. Overnight visits are not allowed.

2. The appropriateness of the visitation will be determined by the patient's physician or the patient's nurse upon the request of the patient or the patient's family. The visit will be arranged by the PCC who will inform the individual responsible for bringing the pet of necessary steps.
3. The patient or his/her family will be asked to bathe, groom and treat the dog or cat for fleas if necessary within 24 hours of the visit.
4. The health of the animal will be confirmed by the PCC prior to the animal entering the hospital. The PCC will inspect the animal to ensure it is clean and free of ectoparasites (fleas, ticks etc.) and skin rashes or problems that may indicate fungal infections.
5. The dog or cat's general temperament will also be screened by the PCC. Aggressive dogs and cats and dogs and cats with a tendency to bite will be excluded. Excessively noisy animals will be excluded.
6. If a dog or cat behaves in a way that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, has a history of such behavior, or is not under the control of the handler, that animal may be removed and not allowed back in the hospital for visitation. LMHS Police is to be notified prior to excluding a Service Animal or Animal Assistant from LMHS.

## References

- Ohio Administrative Code 3701-3-28
- [Hospital Reporting Obligations Pursuant to Ohio Law](#)

Although not included in the definition of a "Service Animal", miniature horses (as defined by the ADA and its regulations) may be allowed only in certain limited circumstances if the miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability and a determination is made that the facility can accommodate the miniature horse. If permitted, miniature horses will be subject to rules and restrictions in this policy.

All revision dates:

5/16/2018

## Attachments

No Attachments

## Approval Signatures

Approver	Date
Heather Burkhart: VP, ACUTE CARE SERVICES	5/16/2018
Angel Wilson: DIRECTOR, LMHP OPERATIONS	4/25/2018
James Farmer: DIRECTOR, LMHS POLICE	3/13/2018
Jeanne Emmons: DIRECTOR, INFECTION PREVENTION	3/7/2018
Kimberly Mathis: QUALITY SPECIALIST	3/2/2018