POLICY

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Purpose:

To provide guidance at Providence Care Hospital for supporting an inpatient with disabilities to have their service dog or guide dog remain with them on the unit or a clinic.

To provide guidance when an outpatient or community visitor brings a dog to a clinic or to the Rehabilitation area.

Visiting pets or pet therapy is addressed in policy ADM-EM-20 ‘Pet Visits/Pet Therapy’.

Keywords: barrier, accessibility, special needs, handicapped, disability support service dog, support person, comfort animal

Policy Statement:

Providence Care Hospital (PCH) acknowledges the vital relationship and dependency that exists between a person with disabilities and their service dog or guide dog (dog). PCH personnel will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate a client and their dog.

The requirements surrounding the inpatient admission or outpatient appointment of a client will be addressed individually, including requirements if PCH is in outbreak.
The dog will be allowed to remain with the client provided the following provisions have been made:

- The dog is adequately trained, well behaved (and when on a leash, it must be a short, fixed leash allowing the dog a radius of 91.44 centimeters (3 feet) from the person holding the leash), and immunized and there are no infection prevention and control reasons that would preclude the dog’s presence.
- The **client must assume full responsibility** for the care and behaviours of the dog **at all times**. The client must delegate this responsibility to a support person while the client is engaged in therapy/attending the appointment.
- The support person’s name and contact information must be made available to staff in case of an emergency when the client is unable to care for the dog or contact the support person, e.g. emergency transfer to Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC).
- The service dog organization’s name and contact information must be kept on file for dog respite, if the organization provided the dog and the client is unable to provide care, e.g. 4-PAWS 613-766-4461.
- The client/support person is required to be able to leave the unit or the clinic to care for the dog. At no time will PCH personnel assume responsibility for meeting the dog’s needs for exercise, nutrition, elimination, etc.
- Any dog currently assisting an inpatient during an outbreak will be permitted to remain in the facility provided that the dog is restricted to the client’s room, with the exception for periods of exercise and elimination, and the client is compliant with the animal’s care and related transmission prevention requirements during an outbreak.
- Dogs are permitted in areas where the client requiring service is located, but are restricted from central supply, clean storage, medication storage and administration, food preparation areas, rooms with immunosuppressant clients, and isolation rooms. Exceptions will be considered as required.

**Definitions:**

**Clients**

Client includes patients and clients.

**Disability**

Disability means:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
• a mental disorder, or

• an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Worker Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

A person with a disability accompanied by a service dog is not required to disclose the nature of their disability.

Guide Dog

A guide dog is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Person’s Rights Act.

Personnel

Personnel includes staff, physicians, medical residents, students, and volunteers.

Service Dog

A service dog is a service animal if it is readily apparent that the dog is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability, i.e. wearing a distinctive harness or vest, or if the person has a letter from a physician, nurse or psychologist, or an identification card from the Ministry of the Attorney General that the dog is a service dog.

Support Person

A support person is a person designated by the client or their Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM) who is familiar with the dog.

PROCEDURE

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Work with the client to inform personnel as early in the pre-admission or registration process as possible of the need for their service/guide dog (dog) to stay with them.</td>
<td>Central Intake/ Patient Registration/ Program Manager/ ACT Specialist</td>
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In planning for the inpatient admission or outpatient appointment, the following must be considered:

• The well-being of the client and the dog

• The client’s and dog’s previous experience with hospitals and if the dog is crate trained

• The anticipated length of stay

• Implications for clients sharing space in the vicinity, e.g. allergies, cynophobia (fear of dogs), or some other unacceptable level of risk
2. Ensure the following documentation is on file on the client’s personal health information record:

- The dog’s current immunization record
- The support person’s name and contact information
- The service dog organization’s name and contact information, if applicable.

3. While a dog is on the unit, in the clinic, or in a Rehabilitation space, be aware that:

- Where the dog is excluded from an area and the client is able to be separated from the dog while obtaining service, the client will contact their support person to provide care for the dog. Offer assistance to the client while they are separated from the dog.
- Notify support departments or clinicians working with the client, e.g. Diagnostic Imaging, Environmental Services, in advance when a client will be accompanied by a dog.
- Arrangements for overnight care of the dog must be made and in place by the client/support person.
- Report incidents involving the dog in SafetE-Net. (Refer to policy ADM-QRM-1 ‘Incident Reporting and Management’.)
- In the event of an emergency, when the dog must be separated from the client, e.g. transfer to KHSC; notify the appointed Support Person to take over care of the dog.
- Notify a Security Guard to obtain a dog containment crate from the Central Equipment Depot (CED) and transport the dog to the Security Office in the main lobby.

4. After each use, clean the containment crate in the wheelchair washer and return it to CED for storage.

References:
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm
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Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005  
Customer Service Standard 429/07  

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.  

Blind Persons' Rights Act. R.S., c. 40, s. 1, s. 2,  
[http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/statutes/blindper.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/statutes/blindper.htm)

The Royal Corporate Policy and Procedure CORPXI-140 ‘Animal Visitation’

**Cross-References:**

Providence Care Administrative Manual Policy and Procedure #ADM-EM-20 ‘Pet Visits/Pet Therapy’

Providence Care Administrative Manual Policy and Procedure #ADM-QRM-1 ‘Incident Reporting and Management’

**Related Policies:**

Providence Care Administrative Manual Policy and Procedure #ADM-CR-6 ‘Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities’

Providence Care Administrative Manual Policy and Procedure #ADM-IC-13 ‘Identification and Management of an Outbreak’

Providence Care Administrative Manual Policy and Procedure #ADM-QRM-4 ‘Patient Relations - Responding to Compliments and Complaints’