

# **WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL (WCRH)**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL**

**SUBJECT: Animals in Hospital Facilities**

**NO: AM 6.56**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/28/2021 NEW**

**PAGE: 1 OF 5**

**REVIEWED/REVISED: 1/24**

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**ADA:** [https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)

### **PURPOSE:**

This policy is intended to address access to Weisman Children's Rehabilitation Hospital by Service Animals.

### **POLICY:**

Service Animals will be permitted in Weisman Children's Rehabilitation Hospital (WCRH) unless the animal's presence would fundamentally alter the nature of the service provided, when a particular animal is not within its Handler's control, or when the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or otherwise jeopardizes the safe operation of the facility. Other animals such as emotional support or comfort animals will be permitted in limited circumstances based on the guidelines below.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **I. Definitions:**

- A. Direct Threat:** A significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or mitigated by a modification of practices or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services.
- B. Emotional Support or Comfort Animal:** An animal that provides a therapeutic benefit through devotion, affection and companionship but does not have training to perform specific tasks for the person's disability/diagnosis.
- C. Individual with a Disability:** A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities including, but not limited to, walking, talking, seeing, breathing, or hearing.
- D. Handler:** The person responsible for controlling and providing care for an animal.
- E. Pet:** An animal that is owned and cared for by an individual/patient that is not a Service Animal, Therapy Pet, or Emotional Support or Comfort Animal.
- F. Pet Therapy:** The use of specifically trained/approved animals for interactions with patients with the intention of providing general therapeutic benefit.
- G. Service Animal:** An animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an Individual with a Disability, including but not limited to:
  - a.** A hearing animal
  - b.** A guide animal

- c. An assistance animal
- d. A seizure alert animal
- e. A mobility animal
- f. A psychiatric service animal
- g. An autism service animal

## II. Service Animals

### A. Identification:

- a. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides; only limited inquiries are allowed under the law. Staff may only ask the following two questions:
  - i. Is this animal a Service Animal required because of a disability?
  - ii. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
- b. Staff should **NOT**:
  - i. Ask about the person's disability. If a person asserts that an animal is required because of a disability, their response should be taken at face value.
  - ii. Ask the Handler to demonstrate the Service Animal's work or task.
  - iii. Ask for registration or certification documents. Service Animals are not required to be certified or registered.
  - iv. Ask for ID cards.
  - v. Ask for letter from a physician.
  - vi. Charge additional fees because of the Service Animal.
  - vii. Refuse admittance, isolate, segregate, or treat the Individual with a Disability less favorably than other patients or visitors.
  - viii. Require that a Service Animal wear a harness, special patch, or vest as identification.

### B. Access and Exclusion:

- a. A Service Animal shall be permitted in any area of the hospital that is unrestricted to inpatients, outpatients, or visitors provided that the Service Animal does not pose a direct threat and the presence of the Service Animal would not require a fundamental alteration in the facilities policies, practices, or procedures.
- b. Consistent with Centers for Disease Control guidance, it is generally appropriate to exclude a Service Animal from limited-access areas that employ general infection control measures, such as:
  - i. Locations where respiratory, enteric, or infectious precautions are in place.
- c. If a determination is made to exclude a Service Animal from all or a portion of the Weisman Children's Rehabilitation Hospital, WCRH shall work with the Service Animal Handler to determine whether any reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures are possible to accommodate the Service Animal.
- d. In the event a Service Animal is excluded or removed from WCRH, WCRH must offer the Individual with a Disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the Service Animal's presence.

- e. A Service Animal Handler, which may be the Individual with a Disability, but does not have to be, must:
  - i. Control the Service Animal. Service Animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the Service Animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the Handler must maintain control of the Service Animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
  - ii. Provide the Service Animal with food, water, and other necessary care (including toileting) or makes such arrangements through family members, friends, or accompanying person. WCRH staff is not to be responsible for providing care for Service Animals.
  - iii. Clean up promptly after the Service Animal, or make arrangements for a family member, friend, or other person to clean up after the Service Animal. WCRH staff is not responsible for cleaning up after the Service Animal.
  - iv. Ensure the Service Animal is vaccinated and licensed, to the extent required by state law and/or local ordinance.

**C. Removal of the Service Animal:**

- a. A Service Animal Handler will be asked to remove the Service Animal or make arrangement for the Service Animal to be removed from the facility in the event of the following:
  - i. The Service Animal is not responding to its Handler's attempts to control the Service Animal and has been determined by the Charge Nurse (who has made an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment) to be out of control.
  - ii. The Service Animal is not housebroken or is incontinent.
  - iii. The Service Animal otherwise poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
- b. Carefully document the circumstances of the refusal/removal and contact the Director of Nursing/Administrator on call in the event a Service Animal is excluded. A single incident of refusal/removal does not necessarily mean that the Service Animal can be excluded indefinitely. The Social Worker will assist in establishing future communications with the Handler.

**III. Emotional Support/Comfort Animals and Pets**

- A.** Emotional Support or Comfort Animals are not considered to be Service Animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act. WCRH is not required by law to allow them access into Weisman Children's Rehabilitation Hospital. For purposes of this policy, WCRH shall treat Emotional Support/Comfort Animals in the same manner as Pets.
- B.** Generally, Emotional Support/Comfort Animals or Pets will not be permitted in WCRH.
- C.** WCRH may choose to allow Emotional Support/Comfort Animals and Pets access to the WCRH on a case by case basis by the Social Worker and/or Infection Control with physician consultation when deemed necessary, and can be performed with limited risk.

- D.** The Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet must be healthy, housebroken and have a personality and obedience level appropriate for the health care setting.
- E.** If permitted access to the facilities, the Handler of the Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet must:
  - a.** Sign the Animal Visitation Agreement prior to the first visit.
  - b.** Check in at the front desk upon arrival. Once checked in, the Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet must go directly to the patient room or other designated visitation area. The door should remain closed for the duration of the visit.
  - c.** Maintain control of the Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet. The Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet must be leashed or crated when entering and exiting the hospital.
  - d.** The Handler will refrain from allowing any visitors or other patients to touch the Emotional Support or Comfort Animal or Pet.
  - e.** Animal handlers must have all required immunizations, restrict contact of their animal with other patient(s) and or visitors and prevent the animal from having contact with invasive devices.
  - f.** Address the needs of the Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet including feeding, watering and toileting. If unable to do so, the Handler may be asked to remove the Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet from the premises.
- F.** WCRH may request that an Emotional Support/Comfort Animal or Pet be removed or not return to the hospital for any reason.

Pet Visitation Agreement Form  
(Emotional Support Pet Only)

- 1) Physician's order is required to bring pet to unit.
- 2) Pet visitation may only occur in non-isolation rooms and in private rooms.
- 3) All visiting pets and handlers must check in at the Nurses' Desk located on notify the Charge Nurse before the pet is allowed to visit. 5) Upon leaving, the handler must check out with the Charge Nurse.
- 4) The pet will be brought to the hospital in a cage, a pet carrier, on a leash with choke-collar, or harness collar
- 5) Pets are restricted to areas where the patient they are visiting is located. Any visitor who brings in a pet is responsible for cleaning up after the pet.
- 6) Staff on any unit can require that a pet be removed based on the patient's clinical condition and/or based on interference with the care of the patient or other patients.
- 7) Proof of Immunization: Veterinary Clinic: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Dates of Immunizations

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Patient Signature Date / Time

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Charge RN Signature Date / Time (Refer to policy Animals in Hospital Facilities)

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Administrator