



TITLE:	Therapeutic Pet Visitation		
Manual/Policy #:	Administration A110	Division:	AGH/ FVM
Original Issue:	January 2007	Issued by:	Infection Prevention & Control Committee & VP Patient/Resident Services & CNE
Previous Date Reviewed	September 2014	Approved by:	Senior Management Team
Last Date Reviewed:	May 2019	Cross References:	

1. POLICY STATEMENT:

Almonte General Hospital and Fairview Manor (The Organization) will support Certified Therapy Dog and Authorized Visiting Pet visitation. No other animals will be permitted to enter the premises, with the exception of Service Animals required by persons with disabilities in accordance with the *Accessibility for all Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Therapy Dog Services will be provided to patients/Residents that request this service.

During outbreak situations all Certified Therapy Dog and Authorized Visiting Pet visitations will be discontinued until notified otherwise.

Certified Therapy Dogs and Authorized Visiting Pets are not allowed in the following areas of the organization:

- Food preparation and public food services area
- Medication storage/preparation areas
- Clean or sterile supply storage areas
- Procedure areas
- Tub or shower rooms
- Patient Isolation rooms
- Emergency Department and Obstetrical Unit (Almonte General Hospital)

1.1 Almonte General Hospital:

Authorized Visiting Pets, (excluding Certified Therapy Dogs), are not to be brought into the hospital environment by patients, staff or visitors except in select humanitarian circumstances where it is deemed therapeutic by the patient's care team and approved by the Manager.

Visiting hours are 8:00 am to 8:00 pm for the Medical-Surgical Unit and the Complex Continuing Care Unit. Authorized Pet Visits and Dog therapy programs will take place within the established visiting hours. Visits should be limited to 30 minutes.

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1.2 Fairview Manor:

Authorized Visiting Pet visits and Certified Therapy Dogs visits will take place between the hours of 9:00 am to 8:00 pm for all of the Fairview Manor home units (Garden Walk, Maple Grove, Old Mill Place and Heritage House). Authorized Pet Visits and Dog therapy programs will take place within the established visiting hours. Visits should be limited to 1 hour per Resident.

2. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Certified Therapy Dogs and Authorized Visiting Pets entering Almonte General Hospital and Fairview Manor. This policy does not apply to Service Animals required by persons with disabilities in accordance with the *Accessibility for all Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Pet Visitation is a means to enhance and promote a patient's/Resident's wellness during their stay at Almonte General Hospital or Fairview Manor. Objectives of these visits include: alleviating loneliness and stress for patients/Residents by providing opportunities to maintain meaningful relationships with their pets; providing stimulus for the withdrawn or anxious patient/Resident through contact with their pet on a reasonably regular basis; and alleviating patient/Resident concerns for a pet's well-being by providing contact through visiting arrangements.

Dog Therapy Programs have also been found to bring comfort, joy and companionship allowing patients/Residents to reap the benefits of unconditional love associated with therapy dog visits. It has been demonstrated that the petting, affection, and regular visitation of a dog can be beneficial to hospitalized patients/Residents (*St. John's Ambulance Therapy Dogs Services Program, 2007*).

The Organization supports the use of pet visitation and dog therapy programs and recognizes the value and therapeutic benefit of both.

4. DEFINITIONS:

Certified Therapy Dogs: Are members of a registered charity that provides animal assisted activity and animal assisted therapy. These dogs are trained, evaluated and annually health certified, insured and registered through the registered charity as therapy dogs.

Authorized Visiting Pet: A family pet that has been pre-authorized by the manager of a unit to visit the patient/Resident. The pet must be considered "good natured" and obedient. The pet must be house-trained, clean and well groomed and annually health certified by a veterinarian.

Pet Handler/ Pet Owner. The individual who is responsible for the Authorized Visiting Pet or the Certified Therapy Dog. A pet handler/pet owner must be at least 18 years of age and be able to safely control the animal.

5. PROCEDURE:

5.1 Responsibilities for Certified Therapy Dog / Authorized Pet Visitation:

5.1.1 Pet Owner /Pet Handler is expected to:

- Provide the Unit Manager/Director of Care with a copy of each of the following documents:
 - a veterinarian issued health certificate vaccination record (including current rabies vaccine)
 - a veterinarian issued negative fecal sample result
 - a signed *Certified Therapy Dog Owner/Visiting Pet Handler Self-declaration Form* (located on the Common Drive in the Forms folder) confirming that the dog is receiving a preventative Flea, Heartworm and Intestinal parasite program such as "*Sentinel*"
- Ensure proper grooming of the animal
- Ensure the animal wears their identification when visiting. (Certified Therapy Dog identification or AGH/FVM identifying scarf for authorized pet visitation)
- Ensure that the animal is free of any skin lesions, parasites, fleas/ticks and diarrhea
- Ensure that the animal has a clean leash and carrier, as appropriate
- Ensure that the animal is on a leash at all times or in a carrier in-between visiting patients
- Prevent animals from licking patients/Residents
- Deter patient/Residents from shaking paws of the animal
- Use barrier methods when placing animals on beds
- Limit visits to the agreed upon time (see above for site specific visiting hours and duration)

5.1.2 Unit Manager is expected to:

- Ensure the Pet Owner/Pet Handler receives a copy and reviews the Therapeutic Pet Visitation policy
- Ensures the Pet Owner/Handler meets all the responsibilities described above (5.1.1)
- Maintain record of completed and signed *Certified Dog / Visiting Pet Self Declaration Form* (located on the Common Drive in the Forms folder) and veterinarian issued Health Certificate Vaccination Record
- Informs staff about the role of the therapy dog/authorized visiting pet and how to interact appropriately with the patient/Resident and the animal
- Discuss with the Pet Owner /Pet Handler and Staff the responsibilities for feeding, handling and cleaning issues
- Notify other patients/Residents of the therapy dog's presence and address any concerns (e.g. allergies)
- Document on Nursing Care Plan Certified Therapy Dog/Authorized Visiting Pet Visitation times

Additional Requirements for Authorized Visiting Pets:

- Determine and document on the patient's/Resident's nursing care plan, whether the Clinical Team supports the patient/Resident receiving a visit from their family pet
- Provide the Pet Owner/Pet Handler with an AGH-FVM scarf for the Authorized Visiting Pet to wear around their neck when visiting
- Determine the appropriate location for the visit and inform the Pet Owner/Pet Handler and the Clinical Team

5.1.3 Staff are expected to:

- Not to touch the therapy dog /authorized visiting pet, without the Pet Owner's permission
- Support the therapy dog visit by gathering patients/Residents into the unit lounge to participate in the visit, if requested by the Pet Owner/Pet Handler.

5.2 Management of Incidents during Any Animal Visitation:

5.2.1 Should the animal eliminate in the facility, the Pet Owner/Pet Handler is responsible for the initial cleaning of the soiled area. Appropriate staff will be called to thoroughly clean and disinfect the area after the initial cleaning by the Pet Owner/Pet Handler.

5.2.2 Should the pet bite or scratch any staff member, the staff member will present to the Emergency Department for assessment. The Director of Occupational Health & Safety and Infection Prevention & Control shall be notified and the appropriate documentation completed.

5.2.3 Should the pet bite or scratch any patient/Resident, the Care Team will notify the appropriate physician and attend to the needs of the patient/Resident. A patient/Resident incident report is to be completed.

5.2.4 Should the pet bite or scratch any visitor, they are to be referred to the Emergency Department for assessment and a patient incident report is to be completed.

5.2.5 Dog bites are to be reported to the local Public Health Department, as well as Occupational Health & Safety and Infection Prevention & Control.

6. REFERENCES:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Customer Service Standard 429/07

[http://www.e-](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm)

[laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm

Ontario OH&S Act and Regulations

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm

Ontario Human Rights Code [http://www.e-](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm)

[laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm)

St.John's Ambulance Therapy Dogs [http://www.sja.ca/English/Community-](http://www.sja.ca/English/Community-Services/Pages/Therapy%20Dog%20Services/default.aspx)

[Services/Pages/Therapy%20Dog%20Services/default.aspx](http://www.sja.ca/English/Community-Services/Pages/Therapy%20Dog%20Services/default.aspx)

Communicable Disease Control- Healthy Pets for People at Extra Risk April 30, 2013

http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/extra_risk.htm

Quinte Health Care Pet Visitation, Service Animals and Therapy Dogs, Jan 21, 2010

7. APPENDICES:

N/A

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.