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Owner: Andrea Heid: LEGAL
ADMINISTRATION MANAGER
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Policies
References:

Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy Program Guidelines, 950-186

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Eskenazi Health patients with the opportunity to experience animal-assisted activity/therapy, in addition to traditional therapy programs. This policy will provide guidelines for animal-assisted activity/therapy programs.

DEFINITIONS

- Animal-Assisted Activities:** Animal-assisted activities provide social, motivational, educational, and/or recreational benefits for people during interactions. These activities do not have to be overseen by health care professionals and do not work toward particular clinical goals.
- Animal-Assisted Therapy:** Animal-assisted therapy is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal is an integral part of the treatment process. Animal-assisted therapy is directed and/or delivered and documented by a health care professional with a specific clinical goal for a particular individual in mind.
- Therapy Animals:** Therapy animals are trained to provide supervised, goal-directed interventions to clients in hospitals, nursing homes, special populations, and specific treatment sites. Therapy animals are not limited to working with people who have disabilities. Therapy animals are usually the personal pets of their handlers. Therapy animals do not have legal protection pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). Employers and public accommodations are not required to allow therapy animals into their facilities, but may do so in their discretion.

POLICY

Eskenazi Health recognizes the many benefits of animal-assisted activity/therapy programs. It is the policy of Eskenazi Health to allow therapy animals to visit Eskenazi Health facilities provided that specific guidelines and procedures are followed. Therapy animal visits will be dependent on patient requests/needs, department approval, and the ability to accommodate the needs of the particular animal. Therapy animals are also subject to the provisions of Hospital Administration Policy 950-145, Access for Service Animals, Therapy Animals, and Pets.

PROCEDURE

- Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy Program Requirements**

- a. Eskenazi Health has sole discretion to determine which animals and handlers may participate in its animal-assisted activity/therapy programs, and reserves the right to deny participation to any therapy animal/handler or to place limits on the number of therapy animals/handlers allowed in Eskenazi Health facilities.
- b. All individuals participating in an animal-assisted activity/therapy program will receive a copy of Hospital Administration Policy 950-186, Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy Program Guidelines and Hospital Administration Policy 950-145, Access for Service Animals, Therapy Animals, and Pets. Handlers and therapy animals must abide by the policies. Handlers must sign the Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy Program Waiver and Release form prior to visitation (Attachment A). The form will be kept on file in Volunteer Services/Medical Transport.
- c. Non-employee therapy animal handlers must successfully complete Eskenazi Health's volunteer orientation prior to participating in an animal-assisted activity/therapy program. Volunteer orientation may be scheduled through Volunteer Services/Medical Transport.
- d. All therapy animal visits must be scheduled and coordinated in advance through Volunteer Services/Medical Transport. Volunteer Services/Medical Transport will document the time and place of the therapy animal/handler's visits.
- e. The department in which the animal-assisted activity/therapy program takes place will be responsible for confirming which patients are interested in animal-assisted activity/therapy visits, as well as those that are excluded due to patient request, or medical reasons. Therapy animal handlers are also responsible for screening for the appropriateness of the activity/therapy session for the patient. The handler should complete risk assessments prior to any visitation/session. The handler should evaluate for infectious disease and trauma risks independently and in terms of the condition of the patient and the actual risk associated with the individual animal.
- f. All animal therapy visits will be documented, including the outcome of each session.
- g. Therapy animal visits may not occur in areas where there is a significant health or safety risk, or where the animal's behavior would be disruptive. Areas of exclusion include:
 - i. Operating rooms
 - ii. Coronary care units
 - iii. Hemodialysis units
 - iv. Intensive care units
 - v. Sterile/semi-sterile procedure rooms (including, but not limited to, cardiac cath suites)
 - vi. MRI suite
 - vii. Areas designated as infectious care or isolation areas
 - viii. Other areas as identified by Eskenazi Health staff
- h. A therapy/activity session may be discontinued if the patient requests discontinuation, or if the handler believes the outcome is not worth the risk, feels the animal is in danger, or if the patient is showing signs of fear of the animal. All reasons for discontinuation of a therapy session must be documented.
- i. Any injuries caused by or to therapy animals must be reported immediately to Volunteer Services/Medical Transport or the House Supervisor. If necessary, immediate medical treatment should be provided to the patient. In the event that a patient, employee, handler, or animal is injured, an

appropriate incident report should be completed.

- j. Employees who wish to participate with their pets in Eskenazi Health's Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy Program must meet all of the requirements set forth in this policy, must obtain prior approval from their Department Director, and must execute the "Authorization for Employee Participation in Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy Program" form (Attachment B). It is within the Department Director's sole discretion to allow an employee the opportunity to participate in the program.

2. Requirements Applicable to Therapy Animals and Their Handlers

- a. Therapy animals must meet the requirements set forth in Hospital Administration Policy 950-145, Access for Service Animals, Therapy Animals, and Pets.
- b. Therapy animals must have certification of current vaccinations and documentation of a yearly physical by a licensed veterinarian prior to visitation. Vaccination certificates and annual health records for therapy animals must be on file in Volunteer Services/Medical Transport prior to visitation. A copy of all animal vaccination certificates and annual health records must also be provided to the Manager of Infection Prevention and Control. The handler is responsible to provide Eskenazi Health with updated health records for their therapy animal.
- c. Handlers must provide verification that the animal has completed minimum training standards from a recognized school for therapy animals, including public access training. Documentation must be on file in Volunteer Services/Medical Transport prior to visitation. If a therapy animal has completed obedience training, canine good citizen tests, and or equivalent training/tests, documentation of such training tests must also be on file in Volunteer Services/Medical Transport prior to visitation.
- d. Handlers must be trained in providing activities and therapies safely, and must know their animal's health status and behavior traits.
- e. Volunteer handlers should clock in/out via the Kronos timeclock and notify Medical Transport leadership upon arrival. Employees who have therapy animals in the workplace should notify Medical Transport management via phone or e-mail at the start of business to indicate that the animal is on site.
- f. Therapy animals and their handlers must wear their Eskenazi Health volunteer identification badges at all times.
- g. Therapy animals must be on a leash or in a cage and accompanied by a handler at all times.
- h. Handlers should relieve their animals prior to visitation. Handlers should work with Volunteer Services/Medical Transport (or the department or EHC designee) to identify appropriate relief areas. It is the handler's responsibility to clean up animal waste and properly dispose of it. All spills and accidents involving a therapy animal must also be reported to Environmental Services so that appropriate disinfectant may be used for clean-up.
- i. Handlers must follow **all** infection control guidelines as set forth by Eskenazi Health.
- j. Handlers must abide by all applicable departmental policies and procedures.
- k. Upon request, handlers must provide proof of appropriate insurance, generally through a homeowner's policy or through a certifying organization.

Attachments:

[Attachment A - Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy Program Release of Liability](#)
[Attachment B - Authorization for Employee Participation in Animal-Assisted Activity/Therapy](#)

Approval Signatures

Approver	Date
Teresa Martin: QUALITY AND RISK COORDINATOR	6/5/2015
Lisa Harris	6/4/2015
Julie Conrad: ASSOCIATE CHIEF COUNSEL/LEGAL SERVICES	5/12/2015
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