

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance		
Patient Care	Original Issue Date:	March 12, 2010
Accessibility - Use of Service Animals by Persons with Disabilities	Review/Effective Date:	March 26, 2010
Approved By: Chief Executive Officer	Next Review Date:	October 05, 2012

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Policy Statement:

Through accessibility planning and with the guidance of the Accessibility Committee, the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) will strategically identify, remove and prevent as many barriers as possible for those persons with disabilities. The HPHA is committed to the continual improvement of access for all those with disabilities, and will welcome all persons to our hospitals by providing access to goods and services that respect the independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity of persons with disabilities.

Objective:

To be responsive to an individual's needs in a manner that protects their dignity and respect and enable persons with physical disabilities to increase their independence, and access our goods and services through the use of service animals.

Procedure:

A service animal is defined as "any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability." The use of service animals shall be permitted except where their presence represents a potential safety concern or risk. There may be possible restrictions of service animals in clinical areas, food services programs, or laboratories. These exceptions would need to be considered on an individual basis to determine whether the service animal poses a possible danger and if other reasonable arrangements can be made.

While the Alliance respects the use of service animals, it is the responsibility of the partner/handler to ensure the safe behavior and appropriate response of the animal at all times. The partner/handler is to ensure the same socially acceptable standards as any individual in the community. Also, the animal must meet local licensing requirements.

The partner/handler must have full control of the service animal at all times. A service animal may be restricted from the hospital if that animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

It is not uncommon for a person to have a disability that results in an allergic reaction to service animals. Persons who are allergic to animals are encouraged to contact the Site Administrator. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue while considering the needs of both persons. It may be necessary for the individual making the complaint to show medical documentation to support that complaint. If the issue cannot be resolved, the hospital will consider 'first person rights'. *If a person uses a service animal and is legitimately present in the hospital and another person arrives with serious allergies, the hospital will not remove the first person to accommodate the second person.* [adapted from Disability Compliance for Higher Education (July 1996) Vol. 1 No 12 (U.S.A.)] To ensure an animal is not misrepresented as a service animal, it is recommended that the service animal be identified as such.

Service Animals are not permitted where sterile procedures occur in accordance with the Health Promotion and Protection Act but are not limited to:

- Operating Rooms
- Birthing Rooms
- Minor procedure rooms or rooms where sterile interventional procedures are occurring
- Rooms in which transmission based precautions are in place (isolated rooms)
- Only service dogs are allowed by law in areas where food is prepared, handled, served and sold. All other types of service animals are excluded.

Directions for staff:

- They should not touch or pet the service animal – if happen to touch then wash their hands immediately.
- Staff are not responsible for the care of the animal
- If the animal has an elimination accident, cleanup procedures should be performed using PPE and disposed of into the regular garbage. The area must be disinfected using hospital policies for disinfection.

Definitions:

Companion animal – In some instances, these animals may be prescribed as treatment for some disabilities for their calming influence, affections, stability or even a feeling of security. They are not trained and not afforded the legal protections of service animals. Companion animals will only be permitted within our hospitals under extremely extenuating circumstances. Their accommodation will be determined on a case by case basis.

A dog in training - A dog being trained; however, it has the same rights as a fully trained dog when accompanied by a trainer and identified as such.

Guide dog - Guide dog is a carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool by persons who are blind or have severe visual impairment.

Hearing dog - Hearing dog is a dog who has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound, e.g. knock on the door, occurs .

Partner/handler - A person with a service animal. A person with a disability is called a partner; a person without a disability is called a handler.

Service Animal - Any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. Service animals are usually dogs but can be any number of animals including monkeys.

Service dog - Service dog is a dog that has been trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties the dog may perform include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after the person falls, etc. Service dogs are sometimes referred to as assistance dogs.

Seizure response dog - Seizure response dog is a dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure, or the dog may go for help. Some dogs have learned to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance.

References:

Association for professionals in infection control and epidemiology, inc. Volume II: Scientific & Practice Elements. 2nd Edition. January 2005. p. 67-5.
Health Protection and Promotion Act, RSO 1990. Ontario Regulation 562.
Food and Safety and Quality Act, 2001.

 AW Signature

Approved by: