



## **Rush Service Animals Policy**

Policy Number OP-0234

Approval Date 4/1/2019

This policy applies to employees, outpatients, inpatients, students, visitors and volunteers whose needs require the use of a service animal.

### **Purpose**

To provide guidelines for service animals for patients and staff.

### **Definitions**

1. Personal pet is an animal kept for pleasure or companionship. In this policy, pet refers only to a dog.
2. Service animal is a dog that is individually trained to do work or to perform tasks for a person with a disability. Service animals do not include household pets, therapy animals, laboratory animals, or resident pets (e.g., aquarium fish, caged birds, etc.).
3. Pet-assisted therapy or visitation is the psychological and physiological benefits of certified therapy dogs and/or miniature horses provided to patients and/or staff. Patients can interact with the animals if they have been medically cleared.
4. Pet handler is a person older than 18 who is in immediate physical charge of the pet and who will be responsible for handling the pet through the entire visitation.
5. Guardian is the individual with a disability who uses the service animal.
6. Clean is the absence of visible sores, rashes, fleas, dirt or other sources of infection.
7. Well behaved is the absence of growling, snarling, barking or other uncontrollable or menacing behavior.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of Rush University Medical Center and Rush University to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination in the use of service animals, to provide access, wherever feasible, to service animals, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its implementing regulations.

### **Application of Policy**

1. The following departments are notified when a guardian is admitted with a service animal.
  - Unit director or assistant unit director
  - Patient placement



- Case management (during business hours) and the Emergency Room Social Worker (after hours)
- Hospital operations administrator
- Primary service
- Risk management
- Infection prevention and control

2. Unless there is evidence that the presence or use of a service animal poses a health risk or that the animal's behavior will be disruptive to medical center or university programs, a service animal will be permitted to accompany its guardian wherever that person goes provided that the animal is clean and well behaved

3. If there is any question regarding whether an animal meets the qualifications in this section, the decision shall be made by the Hospital operations administrator (HOA).

4. If the guardian or guardian's designee is unable to care for the service animal, notify the HOA.

#### **RESTRICTIONS REGARDING SERVICE ANIMALS:**

1. Service animals are restricted from the following areas:

- Operating room suites and post-anesthesia rooms
- Preoperative holding area
- Medication storage areas
- Clean or sterile supply areas
- Nourishment Room

2. Service Animals may be restricted for the following patients:

- Intensive care patients
- Transplant patients
- Significantly immunosuppressed patients
- Isolation-infectious disease patients
- Cognitively impaired patients that cannot safely interact
- Psychiatry patients
- Patients in semi-private rooms

3. Staff with allergies to animals may be reassigned to another patient.



## Responsibility and Procedure

### CARE AND SUPERVISION OF SERVICE ANIMALS:

#### Guardian

1. Care and supervision of a service animal are the responsibility of the guardian.
  - Upon admission, guardian shall provide name and phone number of the person designated to assume responsibility of the service animal.
  - If the guardian is unable to care for the service animal the designee will assume responsibility.
    - Notify HOA if the designee is unable to care for the service animal.
  - Rush University Medical Center and Rush University are not required to supervise or care for the service animal.
2. Anyone other than the guardian or designee should refrain from petting, feeding, startling or separating the animal from the guardian/ designee.

#### Employee

In the event that animal waste occurs, medical center staff should provide the guardian/designee with the necessary supplies to dispose of the waste and to complete clean-up. This process and the materials provided should include the use of disposable gloves, the provision of plastic bags or a toilet for the disposal of the waste, and hospital approved disinfectant to clean the floor.

#### Guardian

If a service animal must be separated from its guardian for a reason stated under Restrictions on Service Animals, it is the responsibility of the guardian/designee to arrange for the care and supervision of the animal during the period of separation.

The guardian/designee should accompany the service animal at all times except when the individual is in a restricted area or temporary supervision has been turned over to another designated individual.

A service animal should remain under control at all times.

The guardian may be held liable for any damage done to the premises or facilities by a service animal.

#### Reference

Murthy, R., Bearman, G., Brown, S., Bryant, K., Chinn, R., Hewlett, A., George, G.B., Goldstein, J.C.E., Holzmann-Pazgal, G., Rupp, E.M., Wiemken, T., Weese, S.J., and Webber, J.D.(2015). Animals in healthcare facilities: recommendations to minimize potential risks. *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, 36(5), 495-516. doi: 10.1017/ice.2015.15



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Animal Requirements (or Basic Requirements for all animals)**

1. All animals must receive a health evaluation by a licensed veterinarian at least once per year.
  - a. This includes but is not limited to:
    - i. An appropriate flea, tick, and enteric parasite control program
    - ii. Annual health screening and vaccinations
  - b. Annual screening for the following:
    - i. Streptococcus A
    - ii. Salmonella
    - iii. Shigella
    - iv. Campylobacter
  - c. And annual vaccinations against the following:
    - i. Distemper
    - ii. Hepatitis
    - iii. Leptospirosis
    - iv. Parainfluenza
    - v. Parvovirus
    - vi. Rabies
  - d. Miniature horses are screened and vaccinated against the following:
    - i. Eastern and Western encephalitis
    - ii. West Nile Virus
    - iii. Tetanus
    - iv. Rhinitis
    - v. Rabies
    - vi. Streptococcus equi (strangles)



## Cleaning

A dog should be bathed within 24 hours of the visit.

1. Cleaning preparation includes:

- a. Brushing or combing the animal's hair coat before a visit to remove loose hair, dander, and other debris as possible.
- b. Animal's nails should be short and free of sharp edges.
- c. Bathe the animal with a mild, unscented (if possible), hypoallergenic shampoo and allow the animal's coat to dry before leaving for the healthcare facility.
- d. Visually inspect the animal for fleas or ticks
- e. Clean the animal carrier if one will be used
- f. Maintain animal leashes, harness, and collars visibly clean and odor-free.
- g. Use only leashes that are non-retractable and 4 to 6 feet or less in length.
- h. Do not use choke chains or prong collars which may trap and injure patients' fingers.