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Policy Subject: Animal Visitation / Service Animals

Infection Control Manual – 00002 6 420

Infection Control Manual

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Policy

The emotional and physical benefits derived from the human-animal bond are well recognized. The therapeutic value of animal visitation in institutional settings is often reported. At times when there is a request by a patient or a family to allow the visitation of a pet, LMHS will allow visits from dogs or cats if and only if the risk of infection transmission can be kept to a minimum. The animal must be healthy and of good disposition. Animals other than those listed above will not be allowed to visit due to a risk of enteric disease (turtles, iguanas etc.) or behavioral issues (ferrets etc.).

Service animals will be permitted to accompany persons within LMHS facilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Procedure

Pet Visitation

1. The appropriateness of the visitation will be determined by the patient's physician upon the request of the patient or the patient's family. The visit will be arranged by the charge nurse who will inform the individual responsible for bringing the pet of necessary steps. LMHS Police will be notified of the date and the time.
2. The family will be asked to bathe, groom and treat the animal for fleas if necessary within 24 hours of the visit.
3. The health of the animal will be confirmed by LMHS Police prior to the animal entering the hospital:
 - 1) A veterinarian's certificate of up-to-date immunizations will be provided:
 Dog: Rabies (3 yr), DHLPP or DALPP (1yr)
 Cat: Rabies (3 yr), FVRCP (1yr)
 - 2) Animals must be free of ectoparasites (fleas, ticks etc.) and skin rashes or problems that may indicate fungal infections.
4. The animal's general temperament will also be screened by LMHS Police. Aggressive animals and those with a tendency to bite will be excluded. Excessively noisy animals will be excluded.
5. When possible, the patient will be in a private room or alone in a double room. If a roommate is to be present, the roommate must be screened for allergy and for phobia by nursing personnel.
6. The animal will be under the control of an adult custodian at all times. Pets will be leashed or caged during the entire visit. The custodian is responsible for any body functions of the animal (taking the animal outside, properly cleaning and disinfecting any spills within the facility).
7. Any animal bites or scratches that occur during the visit (to patient or staff) must be reported to the charge nurse and bites will be followed up by the appropriate Health Department.

8. Pet visitations will not be allowed in the following areas: Critical Care units, Surgery areas, Maternal-Child areas, patient rooms with Isolation Precautions or the Cafeteria.
9. All persons involved with the animal must use good handwashing technique after every contact with the animal.

Service Animals

1. The use of a service animal (dog or cat) by a person with a disability will not be restricted within the Licking Memorial Health System unless the presence of the animal creates a fundamental alteration or a direct threat to the safety of others or to the nature of the service provided.
2. A person accompanied by a service animal will NOT be required to show proof that the animal is a service animal or that the person has a disability. Verbal assurance that the animal is a service animal will be accepted.

Proof of immunization will not be required unless the animal is expected to spend more than 24 hours in the facility. However, the animal must be in good health and be free of ectoparasites (fleas, ticks etc.).

3. It is the responsibility of the disabled person (handler) to provide for the care of the service animal while on the premises. If separation of the handler and the animal is anticipated, alternative care of the animal must be arranged. LMHS Police may be asked to exercise the animal at regular intervals when the handler is a patient and alternative care is not available.
4. LMHS shall not be legally liable or responsible for any incidents or accidents occurring with the care of any animal brought onto its premises. At all times, the owner of the animal agrees to hold LMHS harmless from any and all costs or claims arising from events associated directly or indirectly with the care of the animal.
5. Service animals will generally be restricted from the following areas of the hospital: Critical Care Units, Surgery areas (Holding areas, surgery and PACU), Labor & Delivery and any room with Isolation Precautions in effect. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis by the physician, the risk manager, the infection control officer and/or the nursing supervisor.
6. When possible, a hospitalized patient with a service animal will be in a private room or alone in a double room. If a roommate is to be present, the roommate must be screened for allergy and for phobia by nursing personnel.
7. Any animal bites or scratches that occur during the visit (to patient or staff) must be reported to the charge nurse and bites will be followed up by the appropriate Health Department.
8. All persons involved with the animal must use good handwashing technique after every contact with the animal.

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Animal Visitations



LMHS recognize the emotional and physical benefits derived from the human-animal bond. LMHS will allow visits from dogs and cats ***if and only*** if the risk of infection transmission can be kept to a minimum. Service animals will be permitted to accompany persons within LMHS facilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Pet visitation:

- Your physician will determine the appropriateness of the visitation. The charge nurse will make the arrangements with the individual responsible for bringing in the animal. LMHS Police will be notified of the date and time.
- The family will be asked to bathe, groom, and treat the animal for fleas if necessary within 24 hours of the visit.
- The health of the animal will be confirmed by the LMHS Police prior to the animal entering the hospital. A veterinarian's certificate of up to date immunizations will be provided.
- LMHS Police will screen the animal for temperament; aggressive animals and those with a tendency to bite will be excluded.
- The animal shall be in control of an adult custodian at all times. Pets will be leashed or caged during the entire visit. The custodian is responsible for all bodily functions of the animal (taking outside, properly cleaning and disinfecting any spills within the facility).
- Any animal bites or scratches that occur during the visit (to patient or staff) must be reported to the charge nurse and all incidences will be followed up by the appropriate Health Department.
- Pet visitations will not be allowed in the following areas: Critical Care units, Surgery units, Maternal-Child units, rooms with Isolation precautions, and the Cafeteria.
- **All persons handling the animal must use GOOD HANDWASHING technique after each contact with the animal.**



LMHS shall not be legally liable or responsible for any incidents or accidents occurring with the care of any animal brought onto its premises. At all times the owner agrees to hold LMHS harmless from any and all costs or claims arising from events associated directly or indirectly with the care of the animal.