

# Policies & Procedures #: \_\_\_\_\_

EFFECTIVE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

REVISION DATE: N/A

COMMITTEE APPROVAL: INFECTION CONTROL COMMITTEE

ADMINISTRATION: MEDICAL STAFF

**PURPOSE:** The **Animal Assisted Activities/Therapy (AAA/T) Program**, as described in Appendix A, will serve to enhance the quality of a patient's stay at \_\_\_\_\_ by improving their health and rate of healing via the positive physiological effect of human-animal interaction.

**SCOPE:** \_\_\_\_\_ employees, volunteers, physicians, patients, visitors, and authorized registered therapy animal teams in conjunction with Pet Partners®.

**PROCEDURES:**

## **PART I: RISK MANAGEMENT & SAFETY**

### **A. AAA/T VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES**

- 1) AAA/T volunteers must be Pet Partners therapy animal-registered teams and, as such, agree to the Pet Partners Policies and Procedures for Registered teams as described in the Pet Partners Handler Student Guide.
- 2) Registered Pet Partners therapy animal volunteers are covered by Pet Partners' \$2 million personal liability insurance.
- 3) As Pet Partners-registered volunteers, handlers will have specific training and pass rigorous screening from Pet Partners-licensed instructors and evaluators and veterinarians. Re-testing every two years ensures program quality and consistency.
- 4) Current documentation of volunteer teams and animal credentials shall be maintained in the Volunteer Services Office.
- 5) Volunteers must fulfill all requirements for the \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer Program as follows:
  - Complete/submit \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer Application to the Volunteer Services Office.
  - Complete and sign a Volunteer "Confidentiality Agreement."
  - Wear a picture ID badge (issued by Human Resources) when performing service.
  - Have a mandatory TB test, follow-up test, and required annual test subsequently.
  - Wear approved \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer uniform.
  - Wear closed-toe rubber-soled shoes (no sandals).
  - Sign in and out as designated and record volunteer hours served.
  - Abide by the policies outlined in the volunteer handbook.

**A. AAA/T VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES (cont.)**

- 6) Volunteers will read and become familiar with the AAA/T Protocol as outlined by \_\_\_\_\_ in cooperation with Pet Partners.
- 7) Volunteers and their animals are required to shadow twice in the hospital with a current Pet Partners therapy animal team before starting their individual volunteer service.
- 8) Volunteers will be able to explain the program and answer any questions.

**B. ANIMAL SCREENING (Health, Skills, and Aptitude)**

- 1) Dogs will be the only animals involved in the AAA/T Program at \_\_\_\_\_ at this time and must be Pet Partners-registered therapy animal teams with current registration.
- 2) Pet Partners will have completed specific training and passed rigorous screening from Pet Partners-licensed instructors and evaluators, and veterinarians.
- 3) Animals must pass a thorough examination by a veterinarian prior to registration.
- 4) Animals must be kept on a strict vaccination and parasite prevention schedule, administered and documented by a licensed veterinarian.
- 5) Animals must be clean and well groomed. They shall be bathed and/or thoroughly brushed prior to a visit, nails clipped, ears clean and free of any odor, eyes clean, and have clean breath with teeth brushed.
- 6) Dogs shall wear a nylon, cloth or leather buckle collar, or a 'Gentle Leader.'
- 7) Dogs shall be on a leash no more than 6 feet in length, always remain with the handler and be under control at all times.
- 8) Animals must wear the proper uniform and ID badge to be allowed in patient rooms at \_\_\_\_\_.

**C. INCIDENT PROCEDURES**

In the event of an injury, the volunteer is required to observe the following techniques as outlined in the current Pet Partners Handler Student Guide:

- 1) "Immediately secure the animal so that the situation can be managed. The animal is not to be tied to any furniture, but should be put in the car (weather permitting), carrier, or in an office.
- 2) If the person being visited is injured, they are to be assisted in any way that is appropriate. For example, if the animal jumps on someone and they start to fall, intervene to stop the fall if possible. If someone is injured while sitting or standing (for example, scratched while sitting in a wheelchair), get immediate help. Contact the nearest staff person and report what has happened.
- 3) Only facility staff should provide medical treatment to patients, even if only to apply a Band-Aid. It is never appropriate for a volunteer to give medical aid to an injured patient.
- 4) End the visit. Report the incident in writing to the facility contact person. Fill out any required paperwork, i.e., an Incident Report form."

Upon notification of an incident, the Volunteer Services Office will contact Risk Management and subsequently provide a copy of the "Incident Report" for follow-up.

#### **D. RESTRICTED AREAS FOR ANIMALS**

Pet Partners Therapy Animal Teams shall not enter the following restricted areas:

- 1) Food service areas
- 2) Clean linen storage
- 3) Family Care and Nurseries
- 4) Emergency Room
- 5) CCU (Critical Care Unit)
- 6) Surgery/Day Surgery
- 7) Other Restricted Areas as Indicated
- 8) Areas where immune-compromised patients are located as noted by hospital staff.
- 9) Rooms with signs posted: Family Only, No Visitors, Mask or Gowns Required, Isolation, etc.

#### **E. INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES**

- 1) Visitation shall not take place if a volunteer is ill, not emotionally competent to visit, or has been recently exposed to a contagious childhood disease.
- 2) A volunteer therapy animal team shall not visit if any of the following conditions exist: the animal is sick, on medication, is in heat, is pregnant or is nursing young, is emotionally stressed, or has unusual odor from the ears, body, or mouth.
- 3) Hand washing between clients is critical to infection control and should always be done. Patients should wash their hands before and after a visit to prevent the spread of disease between patients. A waterless, antibacterial wash can be used for these purposes.
- 4) No visiting animal should be in contact with any discharge from a patient. The charge nurse of the ward will make the therapy animal team aware of any patients posing a high risk for spread of contamination.
- 5) Records of animal health screenings shall be maintained by the handler and available upon request from \_\_\_\_\_.

### **PART II: QUALITY ASSURANCE**

#### **F. VOLUNTEER TRAINING (Initial and On-going)**

Volunteers must fulfill all requirements for the \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer Program as follows:

- 1) Complete/submit application to the Volunteer Services Office.
- 2) Attend initial \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer Orientation and complete Annual Comps.
- 3) Complete and sign a volunteer "Confidentiality Agreement."
- 4) Wear a picture ID badge (issued by Human Resources) when performing service.
- 5) Have a mandatory TB test, follow-up test, and required annual test subsequently.
- 6) Wear approved \_\_\_\_\_ volunteer uniform.
- 7) Wear closed-toe rubber soled shoes (no sandals).
- 8) Sign in and out and record volunteer hours served.
- 9) Abide by the policies outlined in the volunteer handbook.
- 10) Be familiar with the AAA/T protocol as outlined by \_\_\_\_\_ in cooperation with Pet Partners volunteer policies and procedures.

## **G. STAFF TRAINING (Initial and On-going)**

An in-service training session will be given to staff for units where AAA/T is scheduled before a therapy animal team visitation is initiated. Staff will be instructed on:

- 1) Goals of the program.
- 2) How to identify patients who should not participate in an animal visit.
- 3) Staff responsibilities before, during and after an animal visit.
- 4) What to expect from the volunteers.
- 5) How to assist the volunteers.

## **H. VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION FOR PET PARTNER TEAMS**

During volunteer orientation, hospital staff will cover the following information as individualized for that area:

- 1) Which entrance to use and where to go upon arrival.
- 2) Who their staff contact person is in Volunteer Services and in the unit.
- 3) Where to sign in and out.
- 4) Where to find the schedule and a list of patients approved to receive a visit.
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ rules and regulations which may affect volunteers during their visit.
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ goals for animal visitation.

## **I. VISITATION DOCUMENTATION (Requirements of Staff and Volunteers)**

- 1) Handlers shall check in at the volunteer office before beginning their shift.
- 2) Handlers shall report to the designated contact on the ward of the nurse's station where they will be visiting prior to any visitation.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_, via the designated ward contact, will provide up-to-date list of patients approved to receive visits by the AAA/T team when they arrive and before they begin to see patients.
- 4) In case of an accident or unusual occurrence, handlers shall follow Pet Partners volunteer policies and procedures for this instance, which includes completing a Pet Partners Volunteer Incident Report Form.
- 5) Upon completion of each visitation shift, handlers shall complete a Visit Report and leave it in the Pet Partners therapy animal binder at the nursing station of the ward in which they visited. Staff suggestions or comments on the visit or for future visits are recommended.
- 6) In the event parental or physician consent is needed for AAA/T visitation, the appropriate forms must be completed prior to visitation.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA)**

The formal definition of animal-assisted activities is:

“Activities that involve animals visiting people. The same activity can be repeated with different people, unlike a therapy program that is tailored to a particular person or medical condition.”

“AAA provides opportunities for motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits to enhance quality of life. AAA are delivered in a variety of environments by specially trained professionals, paraprofessionals, and/or volunteers in association with animals that meet specific criteria.” (From Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Therapy)

### **Key Features of AAA:**

Specific treatment goals are not planned for each visit.

Volunteers and treatment providers are not required to take detailed notes.

Visit content is spontaneous and visits last as long or as short as needed.

### **Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)**

The formal definition of animal-assisted therapy is:

“AAT involves a health or human service professional who uses an animal as part of his/her job. Specific goals for each client have been identified by the professional, and progress is measured and recorded.”

“AAT is goal-directed intervention in which an animal that meets specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is directed and/or delivered by a health/human service professional with specialized expertise, and within the scope of practice of his/her profession.”

“AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning (cognitive functioning refers to thinking and intellectual skills). AAT is provided in a variety of settings and may be group or individual in nature. This process is documented and evaluated.” [Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Therapy, ©Delta Society (Pet Partners®), 1996.]

### **Key Features of AAT:**

There are specified goals and objective for each individual.

Progress is measured.