

LAC+USC MEDICAL CENTER POLICY

Subject: ANIMALS IN HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SETTING	Original Issue Date: 7/14/15	Policy # 240
	Supersedes: 7/14/15	Effective Date: 8/21/20
Departments Consulted: Office of Risk Management Infection Control Nursing Services Support Services Office of Regulatory Affairs Patient Relations & Guest Services	Reviewed & Approved by: Attending Staff Association Executive Committee Senior Executive Council	Approved by: (Signature on File) Chief Medical Officer
		Approved by: (Signature on File) Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE

To allow patients, accompanied by service animals, access to the healthcare facility in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990.

To establish that the animal's handler/patient is responsible for making arrangements for the supervision and care of the animal in the event the handler/patient must be separated from the service animal due to medical procedures and or hospital admission.

DEFINITIONS

A service animal is defined by the ADA as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability, such as:

- Guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision
- Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people
- Alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure
- Pulling a wheelchair
- Picking-up dropped items
- Retrieving medicine or the telephone
- Performing other special tasks.

Service animals are working animals, not pets.

Service animals do not include wild animals, nonhuman primates, reptiles, rabbits, farm animals, (including any breed of horse, pony, miniature horse, pig, and goats), ferrets, amphibians, or rodents.

Therapy/emotional support animals:

- Provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, or promote emotional well being
- May be prescribed by a healthcare or mental health professional and may be incorporated in a treatment process to assist in alleviating symptoms. This treatment occurs within the person's residence
- Do not assist with activities of daily living or accompany disabled persons at all times

Subject: **ANIMALS IN HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SETTING**

Effective Date:
8/21/20

Policy #
240

- Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do **not** qualify as service animals under the ADA.

POLICY

Patients or visitors with a service animal shall be allowed into any area of the healthcare facility, including cafeteria and health food store, even if state or local health code prohibits animals on the premises, unless the service animal:

- Does not appear in good health
- Is not being controlled by the handler
- Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others
- Or when allowing the service animal would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the business/service provided by the facility.

Therapy/emotional support animals are not service animals and shall not be allowed in the hospital/healthcare facility.

The ADA specifies that the care and behavior management of the service animal is the responsibility of the handler.

- The facility is not legally required to provide care, food or a special location for the service animal.
- Healthcare staff is not responsible for cleaning after the animal, the responsibility remains with the handler/patient.

PROCEDURE

Service Animal Identification

Healthcare personnel may ask the person who has the animal:

- If the animal is required because of a disability
- What tasks the animal has been trained to perform.

Healthcare personnel may not:

- Ask about the nature of the patient/visitor's disability
- Require proof or identification of the person's disability
- Require proof of the animal's training, license or certification.

Healthcare staff shall accept any of the following as service animal evidence:

- Service animal identification card
- Other written documentation
- Presence of harnesses or markings on harnesses or tags
 - Some service animals wear special collars and harnesses, which may contain the name of the animal and the school in which the animal was trained.
- Credible verbal assurances of the qualified disabled person using the animal.

Subject: **ANIMALS IN HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SETTING**Effective Date:
8/21/20Policy #
240**Service Animal Care and Management**

In the event the handler/patient must be separated from the service animal, due to a medical procedure or hospital admission, staff shall:

- Ask the patient what arrangements have been made for the supervision and care of the animal while medical services are being provided
- Make arrangements to address the patient's need in the absence of the service animal
- Prohibit staff, patients, or visitors from petting or playing with the service animal

In the event the handler/patient is admitted into the hospital and has no one to assist with the animal's care, staff shall:

- Inform the patient that the animal may not remain in the hospital with the patient due to the patient's inability to provide proper care for the animal and because of infection control issues/requirements.
The handler/patient may:
 - Contact Guide Dogs of America – Sylmar: (818) 362-5834, (press "0" for operator)
This is a training school facility, which may provide boarding services free of charge
 - Call the school that trained and issued the dog (This information is usually on the dog's harness.)
- Ensure the patient contacts the school of their choice immediately, as ADA does not require the facility to provide care for the animal and the animal's care is the handler's responsibility

In the event the patient is unconscious/unable to make the arrangements, the Nurse Manager/Emergency Room staff shall:

- Contact Guide Dogs of America – Sylmar: (818) 362-5834, (press "0" for operator), as soon as it is determined the patient is unable to care for the animal

The school may require the animal's name, which may be on a plate on the animal's harness.

(The school maintains records of the animals they trained and the name of the person/handler with whom the animal was placed)

- Comply with all HIPAA requirements and not discuss the patient/handler's medical condition or treatment with the school personnel

The patient, not the hospital, is responsible for retrieving the animal from the Guide Dogs of America facility upon hospital discharge.

Non-Service Animals

Hospital staff shall:

- Not delay patient's admission because of the delay in getting the animal picked-up
- Inform patients, accompanied by animals that do not meet the service animal definition, of the policy that animals are not allowed in the healthcare facility.
The patient shall be responsible for making arrangements to have the animal picked-up by a family member or friend prior to receiving medical services.
- Assist the patient to contact the Los Angeles City Animal Services Department (ASD), if the patient is unable to get someone to pick-up and take proper care of the animal

Subject: **ANIMALS IN HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SETTING**

Effective Date:
8/21/20

Policy #
240

- North Central LA area:
Dispatch: 323-321-6038 or Officer's Desk: 323-307-7401
- South LA area: 888-452-7381

Patient will inform ASD of the need to have an animal picked up

- ASD requires hospital's name, address, and the area in which the animal will be kept waiting to be picked-up
- ASD identifies animals as "personal property"
- ASD provides shelter for 30 days only, free of charge
- ASD will make the animal available for "adoption" on the 31st day
Patient will need to make other boarding arrangements, if it appears the patient's stay will exceed 30 days.

Leadership will provide guidance on how and where the animal to will remain while waiting to be picked-up.

Visitors Accompanied by Service Animals

Hospital staff shall allow visitors with service animals into the healthcare facility in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Service animal is healthy and well groomed. Conditions that would exclude the animal from entering the hospital include, but are not limited to:
 - Gastroenteritis
 - Obvious flea or mite infestation
 - Skin lesions
 - Poor grooming
 - Epidemiology department recommendation
- Patient being visited is in a private room
- Attending physician, nurse manager, and infection control/prevention approve the visitation
- Patient's wounds are covered prior to the visitation
- Handler/owner:
 - Remains responsible for the service animal's care and clean up, not healthcare staff
 - Prevents patient, visitor, and staff contact with animal saliva, dander, urine and feces

Hospital staff shall:

- Request the handler/owner to permanently remove the service animal from the healthcare facility if the animal:
 - Is out of control and the handler/owner does not take effective action to control it
 - Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others
 - Is biting or scratching
- Immediately report requests to remove service animals to the unit supervisor, Risk Management, and Employee Health
- Ensure affected area(s) are cleaned and treated immediately in accordance with infection control procedures

Subject: **ANIMALS IN HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SETTING**Effective Date:
8/21/20Policy #
240

Hospital staff shall:

- Restrict service animals from entering the following off-limit areas: :
 - Monitored Emergency Room beds
 - ICUs, Operating Room, Recovery Area, Cath Lab, Labor and Delivery
 - Contact, airborne, or droplet precautions
 - Areas containing equipment critical for life support
 - Food preparation areas used for cleaning/storage of human food, utensils, and dishes
 - Employee toilet/shower/dressing areas
 - Drug preparation areas
 - Sterile/clean supply rooms
 - Linen storage areas
 - Areas where soiled/contaminated materials are stored
 - Any room where a patient is considered to be immunosuppressed
 - A service animal may be restricted or denied access to areas where its handler/trainer/raiser would generally be allowed when it is determined that the animal would create a fundamental alteration or direct or implied threat to other persons or to the nature of the services provided
- Allow visitations by animals other than service animals in accordance with the Child Life Program guidelines
- Evaluate service animals and healthcare situations on a case-by-case basis to determine whether significant risk/harm exists and if reasonable modifications in policy and procedures will mitigate the harm/risk.

RESPONSIBILITY

All Employees

REFERENCES

Americans with Disability Act: Business Brief "Service Animals" ADA Business Connection at www.ada.gov

California Hospital Association, Consent Manual 2015 - "Service Animals"

CDC – "Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities" (June 6, 2003/52 (RR10) 1-42) (IV. Service Animals)

U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division-Disability Rights Section "Commonly Asked Questions about Service Animals in Places of Business" <http://www.ada.gov/qasrvc.htm>

Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 <http://www.mtstcil.org/skills/housing-2.html>

Duncan, Susan "The Implications of Service Animals in Healthcare Facilities" (1997, 1998 and 1999 APIC Guidelines Committees)

Guide Dogs of America-Sylmar (Dale Hartford, Director)

L.A. City Animal Services North Area and South Area

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Policy # 475

REVISIONS

August 21, 2020, September 13, 2021