

Sample AAA/AAT 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 the definitions section that follows, will serve to enhance the quality of patients' stays 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 registered Pet Partners® in conjunction with the Delta Society®.

PROCEDURES:

PART I: RISK MANAGEMENT & SAFETY

A. *AAA/T VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES*

- 1) AAA/T volunteers must be Delta-registered Pet Partners and, as such, agree to the Delta Society Policies and Procedures for Registered Pet Partners as described in the attached document.
- 2) Registered Pet Partners are covered by Delta Society's commercial general liability insurance.
- 3) As Delta-registered Pet Partners, handlers will have specific training and pass rigorous screening from Delta-licensed instructors and evaluators and veterinarians. Re-testing every two years ensures program quality and consistency.
- 4) Current documentation of volunteer Pet Partners and animal credentials shall be maintained in the Volunteer Services Office.
- 5) Volunteers must fulfill all requirements for this facility's 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 this facility while performing service.
 - Have a mandatory TB test, follow-up test, and required annual tests in future.
 - Wear approved volunteer garb.
 - 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.
 - Supply volunteer services coordinator with results of yearly veterinary check-ups, including vaccinations.
 - Complete required visit documentation at completion of visits.
 - Communicate changes in visit schedule in advance to both the volunteer services office and the unit and reschedules missed visits.
 - Maintain a professional and cooperative relationship with staff, patients and other team members.
 - Make required number of visits per month (minimum of 2).
 - Remain current with Pet Partner registration.
- 6) Volunteers will read and become familiar with the AAA/T Protocol as outlined by this facility in cooperation with the Delta Society.
 - 7) Volunteers and their animals are required to shadow a current Delta Pet Partner for two visits before beginning their individual volunteer service.
 - 8) Volunteers must be able to explain the program and answer any questions from patients or visitors.

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

- 1) Animals must be Delta-registered Pet Partners with current registration. This facility has chosen to limit visits to the following types of animals:

- 2) Pet Partners will have completed specific training and passed rigorous screening from Delta-licensed evaluators.
- 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 head collar such as the Gentle Leader.
- 7) Dogs shall be on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length, shall always remain with the handler and shall be under control at all times.
- 8) Animals must wear their proper vest and ID badge (as appropriate) to be allowed in patient rooms.

C. INCIDENT PROCEDURES

In the event of an injury, the Delta Pet Partner is required to observe the following techniques as outlined in the current Delta Pet Partners Team Training Course Manual:

- 1) "Immediately secure your animal so that you can manage the situation. Do not tie your animal to furniture or equipment, which can shift surprisingly easily.
- 2) Get help for the injured person. Volunteers should never give medical aid to an injured client. Facility staff, and not volunteers, should be the ones to provide medical treatment to clients, even if the treatment is as simple as applying a Band-Aid.
- 3) End your visit.
- 4) Before leaving, report the incident in writing to your facility contact person so the injury can be documented in the client's medical file. Most facilities have Accident or Unusual Incident Report forms. You will need to fill out all required paperwork."

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 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) No visit shall take place if a volunteer is ill, not emotionally competent to visit, or has recently been exposed to a contagious childhood disease.
- 2) A team shall not visit if the animal is experiencing any of the following conditions: the animal is sick, is 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 Pet Partner 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 ongoing*)

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 refresher courses as required.
- 3) Complete and sign a volunteer "Confidentiality Agreement."
- 4) Wear a picture ID badge issued by this facility while performing service.
- 5) Have a mandatory TB test, follow-up test, and required annual tests in future.
- 6) Wear approved volunteer garb.
- 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 this facility in cooperation with the Delta Society.

G. STAFF TRAINING (*Initial and ongoing*)

An in-service training session will be given to staff for units where AAA/T is scheduled before Pet Partners visits are 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 PARTNERS TEAMS

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

- 1) Which entrance to use and where to go upon arrival.
- 2) Who is the staff contact person 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 visits.

I. VISIT DOCUMENTATION (Requirements of Staff and Volunteers)

- 1) Handlers shall check in at the volunteer office before beginning their shift.
- 2) Handlers shall report next to the designated contact on the ward of the nurse's station where they will be visiting.
- 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 policies and procedures for this instance, which includes completing a Pet Partners Incident Report Form.
- 5) Upon completion of each set of visits, handlers shall complete a Visit Report and leave it in the Pet Partners 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 an AAA/T visit, the appropriate forms must be completed in advance.

Delta Society gratefully acknowledges Denver Pet Partners[®], Diana McQuarrie and the Denver Swedish Medical Center for allowing us to use this abridged version of their AAA/T Policies & Procedures.