

## PERTH AND SMITHS FALLS DISTRICT HOSPITAL

### POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**TITLE:** Pet Visitation

**CREATION DATE:** December 30, 2015

**APPROVED BY:** Senior Leadership Council

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#### Purpose:

The Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital recognizes the value and therapeutic benefit of pet visitation and animal therapy. Objectives of these visits include: to alleviate loneliness and stress for patients by providing opportunities to maintain meaningful relationships with their pets; to provide stimulus for the withdrawn or anxious patient through contact with their pet on a reasonably regular basis; and to alleviate a patient's concern for a pet's well-being by providing contact through visiting arrangements. This policy provides direction when these situations occur.

#### Policy:

Pet visitation at the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PFSDH) will be facilitated where possible. In the interest of patient safety, staff safety and infection control requirements, restrictions are necessary when bringing animals into the hospital for visits. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to bringing a pet belonging to a patient onto the hospital premises for the purpose of visiting a patient. Pets are not allowed in the following areas of the hospital:

- Food preparation and public food services area
- Medication storage/preparation areas
- Isolation rooms
- Intensive Care Units
- Procedure areas (operating room, labour/delivery, pre/post-op recovery areas)
- In a room where there is an immunosuppressed patient
- In a room where there is post-operative patients

#### Requirements:

In order for an animal to enter the hospital the animal must meet the following criteria. The animal shall:

- Be healthy and free of parasites
- Have proof of up-to-date rabies vaccination
- Be bathed and groomed within 24 hours of the visit
- Not have been fed within 2 hours of the visit
- Be transported in a carrier or on a leash
- Have an accompanying adult handler at all times, and
- Not interact with other patients

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If there is any concern, a certificate from a Veterinarian will be requested.

**Note:** Staff or volunteers are not permitted to bring their pet(s) onto hospital premises outside of the above mentioned circumstances.

Exception to this Section: This section does not apply to Service Animals or to the Therapy Dog Program.

## Procedure

1. The request for pet visitation to a patient care unit must be pre-arranged with the Intraprofessional care team by contacting the In Charge Nurse, or delegate, in advance of the visit in order to determine appropriateness, time, place and length of visit. One animal is permitted per visit.
2. The person bringing the animal to the unit is responsible for the animal's actions at all times.
3. Visiting animals shall be limited to cats and dogs that are household pets and shall be kept on a short leash or in a cage at all times. No reptiles, birds or rodents are permitted to visit (Lefebvre et al, 2008). Pets shall be taken directly to the patient they are visiting and will exit immediately after.
4. If the patient is in a private room, the visitor and pet may go directly into the room, except in the circumstances listed in the policy statement above.
5. If the patient is in a multiple bed unit, the pet will be allowed to accompany the visitor unless a medical reason contraindicates that visit; for example, the illness type of the patient or of the other patients in the room, i.e. allergies, infection or fear of pets. If the visit is still desired by the patient, then the patient should be brought to a private area and the visitor and pet may visit there.
6. If there are concerns about allergies of care providers, or other patients who will occupy the visitation area, the manager/delegate is to contact the housekeeping department to discuss cleaning procedures or an alternate area for the visitation (i.e. an area that is easily wiped down).
7. All persons who touch/handle the animal shall practice hand hygiene before and following contact with the animal.
8. If an elimination accident should occur, the individual who has escorted the pet will be given gloves, paper towels, and a plastic bag to clean up the urine/feces. Housekeeping will then be contacted to mop up the floor.
9. No food for the pet should be brought into the hospital.
10. Infection control protocols shall apply in all circumstances, where applicable.

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**Recording and Reporting:**

- Arrangements for the visit shall be recorded on the Patient Care Plan
- Results of the visit are to be recorded in the patient's health record
- Adverse incidents related to the patient or visitor should be reported on the PSFDH Event Report System
- Adverse incidents involving staff should be reported on the PSFDH Cares Event Report as per OH&S Policy 8.1, Workplace Illness, Injury Hazard Reporting

**Revision History**

January 2016

July 2017

March 23, 2022

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