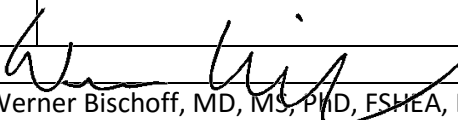
	Service Animals in the Healthcare Setting	Type:	Tier 2
		Original Date:	3/1/2003
		Current Date:	9/20/2017
		Contact:	Infection Prevention
Approval Signature:		Date Approved:	9/20/2017
Typed Name and Title:		Werner Bischoff, MD, MS, PhD, FSHEA, Health System Epidemiologist	

1. General Policy

It is the policy of Wake Forest Baptist Health to comply with The Americans with Disability Act requirements related to the use of service animals and to establish guidelines for the management of service animals at WFBH.

a. Scope

Wake Forest Baptist Health (WFBH), North Carolina Baptist Hospital (NCBH), Davie Medical Center (DMC), Lexington Medical Center (LMC), and Wilkes Medical Center (WMC) employees, faculty, staff, students, volunteers, and other affiliated workers or personnel are responsible for complying with this policy.

b. Responsible Departments

- i. **Owner:** Infection Prevention and Health System Epidemiology
- ii. **Procedure:** Infection Prevention and Health System Epidemiology
- iii. **Supervision:** Infection Prevention and Health System Epidemiology
- iv. **Implementation:** Infection Prevention and Health System Epidemiology

2. Definitions

- a. **ADA:** The Americans with Disabilities Act. A federal civil rights law that protects persons with disabilities from discrimination in the areas of employment, public services, public services, services operated by private entities, and telecommunications.
- b. **Disability:** As defined by ADA, any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including but not limited to walking, talking, breathing, hearing, or caring for oneself.
- c. **Policy:** As defined in the Policy on Creating and Amending Policies, a statement of principle that is developed for the purpose of guiding decisions and activities related to governance, administration, or management of care, treatment, services, or other activities of WFBH. A policy may help to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, promote one or more of the missions of WFBH, contain guidelines for governance, and set parameters within which faculty, staff, students, visitors, and others are expected to operate.
- d. **PPE:** Personal Protective Equipment
- e. **Service Animal:** A dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. The work or task a dog or miniature horse has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs or miniature horses whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Examples of service animals include guide dogs, hearing or signal dogs, and mobility dogs.
- f. **Wake Forest Baptist Health (WFBH):** Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and all affiliated organizations including Wake Forest University Health Science (WFUHS), North Carolina Baptist Hospital (NCBH), all onsite subsidiaries as well as those off-site governed by WFBMC policies and procedures.

3. Policy Guidelines

a. Areas where Service Animals are generally permitted

As required by ADA, persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animals in all areas of the facility in which that person would otherwise be allowed, except as specified below, provided the animal is a service animal as defined by the ADA (see Exhibit 1).

A service animal is generally permitted to accompany its owner in areas where healthcare staff, visitors, and patients are permitted to enter without taking heightened infection prevention precautions, including but not limited to measures such as donning PPE, mandatory hand washing, or any other infection prevention requirements that may be placed on those entering the area.

b. Restrictions

A person with a disability may not be entitled to the right to be accompanied by a service animal under ADA law in certain circumstances if it is determined that the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or if the presence of the animal would fundamentally alter the services provided by WFBMC. A service animal will be considered a “direct threat” if it is determined by medical personnel that the presence or use of a service animal would pose a significant risk to the health or safety of others and this risk cannot be eliminated or mitigated by a reasonable modification of policies, practices, or procedures.

Service animals may be restricted from the following areas:

- i. Invasive procedure areas where sterility is required, including but not limited to the operating rooms, recovery rooms, cardiac catheterization laboratories, interventional radiology and the endoscopy suites;
- ii. Isolation rooms;
- iii. Burn units;
- iv. Patient care areas where the patient population is immunologically compromised;
- v. Food and medication preparation areas where appropriate hygiene is required;
- vi. Where necessary medical equipment causes an obstructive pathway for the patient, visitor, or animal (a visitation site may be established away from the bedside in an area such as a lounge);
- vii. Other areas as deemed appropriate by medical personnel;
- viii. In intensive care units, it is preferable for a patient’s service animal to be present only if the patient still requires the animal’s service.

Service animals may be excluded from WFBH if the animal exhibits aggressive behavior such as snarling, biting, scratching, or teeth baring; if the animal is excessively noisy; or if the animal exhibits symptoms or signs of infection.

c. Patient Responsibility

- i. When a patient is accompanied by a service animal and is admitted to the hospital, the following shall apply:
 1. The patient and/or designated person shall complete the *Service Animal Information* and *Consent to Transfer the Care of the Service Animal* (see Exhibits 1 and 2);
 2. The patient and or designated person is responsible to follow all leash and vaccine laws and be responsible for control of the animal at all times;
 3. The patient and/or designated person is responsible for the feeding, watering, walking, bathroom requirements, and any other needs of the animal;
 4. In the event of a medical emergency occurring during the inpatient stay and the patient and/or designee is no longer able to provide care for the animal or has no one to help with the duties, the following steps will be implemented by WFBH staff:
 - a. Notification of Security;
 - b. Notification of the person listed on the *Service Animal Information* form;
 - c. If necessary, the service animal will be boarded with a local veterinarian at the owner’s expense;
 - d. At such a time the patient becomes or is able to manage the service animal, the animal will be returned to the patient.

5. After direct contact with the service animal or any item in contact with the animal, a person shall cleanse his/her hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water;
6. The service animal is not allowed to come in contact with the patient's non-intact skin.

d. Employee Responsibility

- i. Admissions will consider room assignment case by case;
- ii. Completion of the *Service Animal Information* and *Consent to Transfer Care of the Service Animal* forms will be completed during the initial assessment of the patient;
- iii. The handler is not required to carry any certification papers showing the animal has been trained as a service animal;
- iv. The animal is not required to wear any special gear or identification, although the animal should be tagged with the appropriate identification information in the event of separation, to facilitate it being reunited with the owner;
- v. Identify the service animal by asking the handler/owner, "Is this a service animal?" If the answer is, "Yes," ask, "What tasks has the animal been trained to do for you?" Animals without such training are considered pets;
- vi. Do not attempt to pet this animal. It is not a pet and doing so may confuse the animal and distract it from its responsibility, which is to provide assistance to the patient;
- vii. No special housekeeping methods are needed provided there is no contamination with animal urine, feces, vomit, or blood, but if this happens:
 1. Perform clean-up procedures, using appropriate PPE;
 2. Remove spill with paper towels and dispose of via the sanitary sewer system or by placing in a plastic bag in a trash container; and
 3. The area of the spill should then be cleaned with a hospital approved disinfectant.
- viii. After direct contact with the service animal or any item in contact with the service animal, employees will perform hand hygiene with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

4. Review/Revision/Implementation

- a. **Review Cycle:** This policy shall be reviewed by Infection Prevention at least once every 3 years.
- b. **Office of Record:** The Legal Department shall be the office of record for this policy.

5. Related Policies

Handling of Unattended Wild and Domestic Animals

6. Governing Laws/Regulations

Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III, Section 36.302 (C)

APIC State of the Art Report, Implications of Service Animals in Healthcare Settings, *AJIC Am J Infect Control* 2000; 28: 170-80

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthcare Control Practices Advisory Committee, Guideline for Environmental Infection Control in Healthcare Facilities, *MMWR* June 6, 2003, Vol. 52/No. RR-10