

 <p>Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg Caring for Health À l'écoute de notre santé</p> <p>OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE</p>	<p>LONG TERM CARE INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM</p>		
	<p>Pets & Pet Therapy in Personal Care Homes and Long Term Care Facilities.</p>		<p>Page: 1 of 6</p>
	<p>Approval Signature: </p>	<p>Supersedes:</p>	
	<p>Date of Approval: October 29, 2015</p> <p>Date of Revision: October 2018</p>	<p>Pets & Pet Therapy in Personal Care Homes and Long Term Care Facilities (December 6, 2007)</p>	

1.0 **PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To prevent transmission of infection related to pets and Pet Therapy within WRHA facilities and WRHA funded facilities.

2.0 **DEFINITIONS:**

- 2.1 **Communicable Disease:** An illness due to a specific infectious agent, or the toxic products of the infectious agent that arise from the transmission of that agent from a reservoir to a susceptible host either directly from an infected person or animal, or indirectly through an intermediate plant or animal host, vector or inanimate environment. The term communicable disease is synonymous with contagious disease or infectious disease.
- 2.2 **Facility Approved Disinfectant:** A disinfectant cleaner that has been approved by the facility/organization.
- 2.3 **Hand Hygiene:** A general term that applies to hand washing, antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand rub or surgical hand antisepsis.
- 2.4 **Pet Therapy:** The use of trained, well groomed, medically screened, properly vaccinated animals by handlers to achieve specific physical, social, cognitive, and emotional goals with residents; also called animal assisted therapy.
- 2.5 **Service Animal:** Animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other specific tasks. Services animals are working animals, not pets
- 2.6 **Visiting Pets:** Animals that belong to or are assigned to registered volunteers where the pets and volunteers have been trained through a pet therapy/pet handler program (e.g. St. John's Ambulance Pet Therapy Training or equivalent)

- 2.7 Family Pets: Approved dogs or cats that belong to the Resident or family of a Resident

3.0 **OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES:**

- 3.1. This guideline does not address Service Animals in LTC Facilities. Refer to the [WRHA Policy 10.60.010 Access for Persons with Service Animals](#).
- 3.2 Pets may live in personal care homes/long term care facilities (PCH/LTCF) with the exceptions of:
- Reptiles and amphibians (lizards, snakes, iguanas, turtles, frogs, salamanders).
 - Nonhuman primates
 - Hamsters, gerbils, mice, rats
 - Hedgehogs, prairie dogs or any other recently domesticated animal species
 - Other animals that have not been litter trained or for which no other measures can be taken to prevent exposure of residents to animal excrement.
- 3.3 Reptiles, rodents, and amphibians (ex: snakes, lizards, iguanas, and turtles) or other animals posing behavioral or disease risks (ex: raccoons, skunks, ferrets and bats) shall not be allowed in any facility.
- 3.4 A staff person(s) shall be designated the responsibility for a Pet Therapy Program and shall develop guidelines for the program in consultation with the site ICP.
- 3.5 All requests regarding therapy pets/visiting pets/family pets entering the health care facility shall be discussed with the site Infection Control Practitioner (ICP) or designate prior to the visit.
- 3.6 Pets shall be removed from the facility if the requirements of this Operational Guideline are not complied with.
- 3.7 Pets visiting or living in a facility shall be free of hookworms, fleas, ticks or mange (mite infestation), skin lesions, infections or any communicable disease. For visiting therapy pets a protective pad should be placed between the Resident and the animal or furniture and the animal (to prevent exposure to allergens from hair and dander); the protective pad should be laundered or discarded after use.
- 3.8 Pets visiting or living in a facility shall be housebroken, clean, well groomed (i.e., staff of the facility can ask the owner to remove animals that appear dirty and/or disheveled), of an appropriate temperament and obtained from reputable sources. They shall be licensed according to municipal regulations, examined by a veterinarian to ensure good health and up to date vaccinations. Owners and designated visiting handlers shall be responsible for producing up to date veterinarian and vaccination records when their pet visits a facility.
- 3.9 All staff, residents, families, visitors and volunteers shall perform hand hygiene and follow Routine Practices before and after contact with pets, cleaning and disposing of pet body wastes/fluids.

- 3.10 Every reasonable and practical effort shall be made to keep animals away from residents with allergies, phobias or dislikes.
- 3.11 Pets shall be allowed onto facility premises where the general public is allowed. Generally pets shall not be allowed in non-pet designated areas such as dining rooms during meals, medication rooms, food preparation areas, storage areas, maintenance areas or laundry areas, etc. Exceptions shall be discussed with the person responsible for pet therapy. The pet must not get underfoot in a situation where it could trip a Resident, Visitor, Volunteer or Staff Member.
- 3.12 Bite injuries caused by an animal shall be:
- Evaluated and treated promptly by medical personal following protocols for the type of injury
 - Reported to the owner/person responsible for the facility pet therapy program
 - Reported to Animal Services Agency (Call 311 Winnipeg City Services)
 - Recorded in the resident's health record. An occurrence report shall be completed.
 - The animal that caused the injury shall not return, nor be kept in the facility.
- 3.13 The Pet Owner/Handler is responsible for any and all costs related to any and all damage/injury caused by the Pet.
- 3.14 The facility reserves the right to limit the number of family/visiting pets at any one time. Contact between pets unfamiliar to each other should be avoided to prevent the potential for responsive behavior outbursts.

4.0 **PROCESS:**

4.1 Pets Living Within a PCH/LTCF:

- 4.1.1 Pets shall receive yearly checkups and vaccinations as required. A record of the pet's yearly checkups and vaccinations shall be recorded on a Veterinary Records form (see sample Appendix A).
- 4.1.2 Any pet displaying signs of illness shall be isolated and examined by a veterinarian.
- 4.1.3 Injuries to pets, pet illness or missing pets shall be recorded according to facility policy/procedures.
- 4.1.4 Pet care shall include regular grooming, checking for parasites, lumps and wounds, and examining and clipping claws/nails; daily cleaning of cages, sleeping and eating areas; regular washing and changing of pet bedding.
- 4.1.5 Areas for pet elimination shall be designated, away from resident traffic, and cleaned daily. Avoid direct contact with animal urine and feces. Clean-up of animal urine and feces require gloves and soapy warm water. Leak resistant plastic bags are required when discarding the absorbent materials used for clean-up.

4.2 Family/Visiting Pets:

- 4.2.1 All requests regarding Family/Visiting Pets entering the health care facility shall be discussed with the site Infection Control Practitioner (ICP) or designate.
- 4.2.2 Family/Visiting Pets will not be allowed to visit during time of infection outbreaks or any other time where pet visits are deemed inappropriate.
- 4.2.3 Family/Visiting Pets shall be leashed and supervised at all times when in the facility. Exceptions shall be discussed with the person responsible for pet therapy. Pets should never be left unattended.
- 4.2.4 Owners or handlers of Family/Visiting Pets shall be responsible for disposing of any pet litter or fluids in appropriate receptacles and cleaning with a facility approved disinfectant, using appropriate personal protective equipment.
- 4.2.5 Family/Visiting Pets shall be removed if excessive noise is disturbing to residents. An excitable or nervous pet or a pet that has ever bitten a human must never be brought into the facility.
- 4.2.6 Family/Visiting Pets shall be prevented from entering the facility, if the pet has symptoms as listed below, starting from the onset of symptoms and until at least 1 week beyond the resolution of:
 - Episodes of vomiting or diarrhea
 - Urinary or fecal incontinence
 - Episodes of sneezing or coughing of unknown or suspected infectious origin
 - Treatment with topical antimicrobials
 - Treatment with any immunosuppressive medication
 - Open wounds
 - Ear infections
 - Skin infections
 - Orthopedic or other conditions that in the opinion of the animals veterinarian, could result in pain or distress to the animal during handling and/or maneuvering within the facility
 - Demonstrating signs of heat.
 - Pets that are fed raw foods or a raw food diet within the previous 90 days are prohibited to visit.

5.0 **REFERENCES:**

- 5.1 Association for Professional in Infection Control & Epidemiology, Inc. APIC Text of Infection Control & Epidemiology. January 2005.
- 5.2 Guidelines for animal assisted interventions in Health Care Facilities, American Journal of Infection Control 2008; 36:78-85.
- 5.3 Health Canada. (1994) Infection Control Guidelines for Long Term Care Facilities.
- 5.4 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health Care Facilities, 2003.
- 5.5 U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Disability Rights Section, Americans with Disability Act. <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/svcanimb.htm>
- 5.6 WRHA, Policy # 10.60.010 "Access for Persons with Service Animals". May 2015. Available at <http://home.wrha.mb.ca/corp/policy/files/10.60.010.pdf>
- 5.7 Winnipeg Health Region Wave, "Friends with Benefits", Christine Holowick-Sparkes. January/February 2012
- 5.8 CMAJ August 12, 2008 "New Pet Visit Guidelines Aim to Control Infections.
- 5.9 Misericordia Health Centre, Policy 100.030.14 "Pet Visitation and Guide Dog Access". June 2013
- 5.10 Canadian Registry of Therapy Animals and Service Animals (CRTASA). <http://www.crtasa.com>.

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<i>Approved by the LTC IP&C Committee</i>	<i>September 3, 2015</i>
<i>Approved by Medical Directors Advisory</i>	<i>October 15, 2015</i>
<i>Approved by Directors of Care</i>	<i>October 20, 2015</i>
<i>Approved by LTC Leadership</i>	<i>October 29, 2015</i>

Sample Form
VETERINARY RECORD

Name _____ Species _____ Breed _____

Age _____ Sex _____ Spay/Neuter Date _____

Veterinarian _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Emergency Number _____

Vaccinations/Checkups (records attached)

Date _____ Date _____

Date _____ Date _____

Date _____ Date _____

Medical History

MEDICATION NAME	TIME	DOSE	STOP DATE

Comments

Diet _____

Special Diet/Restrictions _____