

# Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), Personal Pet Visitation, and Service Animals Policy

Bryan College of Health Sciences follows Bryan Medical Center's Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), Personal Pet Visitation, and Service Animals Policy.

## Definitions

1. Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) – A goal-directed intervention that uses a skilled handler and trained dog to provide therapy to assist the patient in the healing process. Bryan Medical Center Volunteers and Customer Care volunteer teams only.
2. Personal pet visit – A visit that takes place between a patient and their dog.
3. Service animal – Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or task performed by the service dog must be directly related to the individual's disability. Service dogs are not pets, they are an extension of the handler. Service dogs are a necessary tool used for a specific purpose.
4. Service animals in training – Dogs participating in the training process to become a service animal. The Americans with Disabilities Act does not cover service animals in training, however Nebraska State Statute states service animals in training are entitled to all rights and privileges to that of a service animal. Service animals in training by law are afforded access to all public areas and places for the purpose of training the service animal.
5. Emotional support and comfort animals – These animals are not service animals. They provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and help with depression, anxiety and certain phobias. NOTE: Emotional support and comfort animals are not allowed inside any Bryan facility.

## STEPS

- I. AAT Visits
  - A. AAT dogs and their handlers are official Bryan Medical Center volunteers and have met all certification and vaccination requirements.
  - B. AAT visits are scheduled through the Volunteers and Customer Care department and are conducted with Bryan Medical Center patients only.
  - C. AAT dogs and their handlers are identified by a Bryan Medical Center volunteer name badge and the handler wears a Bryan Medical Center volunteer uniform.
- II. Inpatient Personal Pet Visits
  - A. Inpatient personal pet visits are limited to dogs only.
    1. Exception: for end of life personal pet visits, contact the Administrative Manager.
  - B. These visits are scheduled in advance through the Volunteers and Customer Care department M-F 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
  - C. When scheduling, Volunteers and Customer Care will verify the following:
    1. Patient's name and room number
    2. The patient is the dog's owner
    3. The visit is appropriate (verified with patient's nurse)
    4. Handler knows required vaccination records to bring
    5. Handler understands parameters of visit:
      - a. Must enter through Medical Center main entrance
      - b. Must stop at the information desk
      - c. Must show vaccination records
      - d. Must obtain and display the provided authorization tag on the collar of the dog
      - e. Must take direct route to and from the elevator, patient room floor and patient's room
      - f. Must not stop and visit other patient rooms, waiting areas/rooms, lobbies, etc.
  - D. Volunteers and Customer Care will notify patient's nurse, Administrative Manager and Security of the scheduled visit.
- III. Service Animals and Service Animals in Training
  - A. Service animals and service animals in training at Bryan Health are limited to dogs only.
  - B. Staff may ask two questions of the handler

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability; and
  2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform.
  - C. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service dogs must be harnessed, leashed or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service dog's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices.
  - D. These dogs must always remain under the control of the handler.
  - E. The handler does not have to provide proof of training or vaccination.
  - F. Dogs may be denied access to the facility or accommodation if the animal behaves inappropriately:
    1. Disrupting business
    2. Behaving aggressively
    3. Interfering with other patrons or clients (sniffing or jumping)
    4. Bladder or bowel accidents
  - G. Staff is not required nor expected to provide any type of care, including walks, bathroom breaks, etc. or food for a service dog.
- IV. Bryan Employees/Students/Volunteers, Licensed Independent Practitioners and Building Tenants
- A. Employees that have a disability or condition which requires the presence of a service or therapy animal should contact Human Resources.
  - B. Personal animals/pets belonging to Bryan employees/students/volunteers (not AAT), licensed independent practitioners, and building tenants are not allowed in Bryan Health buildings.
  - C. Exceptions:
    1. Fish aquariums that are professionally maintained on a regular basis.
    2. Bryan-sponsored events that request animals. These animals must be registered through Volunteers and Customer Care prior to the event.
- V. Protective Measures
- A. Vaccination records must be current for all visiting dogs.
  - B. Visiting dogs must be on a leash, in a cage or have a harness device.
  - C. A handler must be present at all times.
  - D. Patient or patient's representative and nurse must give consent for visit.
  - E. Visiting dogs must be housebroken.
  - F. The visiting dog must be well-groomed and must not have any active lesions, drainage, infections or infestations (fleas, ticks).
  - G. Unhealthy or unkempt dogs will be refused a visit
  - H. A bath or brushing/combining pet prior to visit is encouraged, to remove dander and reduce allergic reactions
  - I. Dogs exhibiting disruptive or aggressive behavior or losing bladder/bowel control will immediately be removed from the facility, taking care to avoid any additional stimulation.
    1. Contact Environmental Services to clean up accidents.
  - J. Assist patient (as needed) in performing hand hygiene following the visit.
  - K. Offer a hand sanitizing agent or disinfectant towelette to those who cannot wash their hands at a sink.
  - L. Healthcare workers must wash hands or use an alcohol hand sanitizer if physical contact is made with the visiting dog.
- VI. Aquariums
- A. Aquarium maintenance is contracted out. Hospital employees shall not service aquariums.