

NORTHERN NEVADA ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
POLICY AND PROCEDURE DIRECTIVE

SUBJECT: ANIMAL FACILITATED THERAPY, SERVICE AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORTIVE ANIMALS

NUMBER: NN-IC-12

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REVIEW/REVISE DATE: 05/05/05, 04/03/08, 2/17/11

APPROVAL: Rosalynne Reynolds, {s}, Agency Director

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of pet therapy, service and emotional supportive animals at Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS). Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go. This federal law applies to all businesses open to the public, including restaurants, hotels, taxis and shuttles, grocery and department stores, hospitals and medical offices, theaters, health clubs, parks, and zoos.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of NNAMHS to maximize the benefit of pet therapy, services and emotional supportive animals while maintaining a safe environment for the consumers, visitors and staff.

### III. REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee, Draft Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Healthcare Facilities, 2001
2. Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services Policy and Procedure #5.023 Work Incurred Injuries and Worker's Compensation.
3. Department of Justice 28 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 35; CRT Docket No. 105; AG Order No. RIN 1190-AA46, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services

### IV. DEFINITIONS

1. Service Animal: Any animal that is individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition." Service animals are working animals, not pets.

#### IV. PROCEDURE

##### A. Service Animals

1. Service animals have access to the grounds and buildings when they are with their owner.
  - a. NNAMHS staff may ask if an animal is a service animal or ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform, but cannot require special ID cards for the animal or ask about the person's disability.
2. Service animals must remain on a leash and in the control of the owner at all times and are not to be left in the care of anyone other than the owner.
3. Pet therapy animals may have access to the grounds or buildings. The requirements listed below must be considered.
4. Any exception to this procedure requires a variance that, if granted, requires maintenance of applicable health standards and certificates.
5. A request for such a variance should be made in writing to the Agency Director (or designee) or Chairperson of the Infection Control Committee.

##### B. Animal Assisted Therapy

1. The following conditions are to be met when considering the granting of the permission for pet therapy activities:
  - a. Animals (excluding service animals) will be in common or central areas specific to the therapeutic activity
  - b. Animals will be in good health and meet the following requirements:
    - i. Current and complete vaccinations will be maintained on file with the infection control officer or in the case of a staff member with the employee's medical file.
    - ii. Animals will be routinely screened for enteric parasites and/or evidence of a recently completed anthelmintic regimen. Screening requirements are to be pre-determined by the infection control officer
    - iii. Free of ecto-parasites (e.g. fleas, ticks)
    - iv. No obvious dermatologic lesions that could be associated with bacterial, fungal or viral infections or parasitic infestations.

- v. Clean and well groomed.
  - vi. Well behaved and non-violent.
  - c. The area used for pet therapy will be cleaned immediately following after visits according to standard cleaning procedures.
  - d. Strict hand washing or hand hygiene measures (use of alcohol-based hand de-germing agents when sink is not available) will be mandated for staff, consumers and visitors involved in the activity.
  - e. People are to avoid contact with any urine or feces.
    - i. The owner will be required to clean environmental surfaces using gloves and appropriate cleaning agent.
    - ii. All feces and absorbent materials used in cleanup are to be placed in a leak resistant plastic bag to be discarded in a closed waste container located outside the building.
  - f. Precautions to prevent bites are to be taken. Animals deemed dangerous may be restricted from the facility.
  - g. Should an animal caused injury occur, an incident report is to be completed and the event reported to the appropriate supervisor. Medical attention should be sought as necessary. If the injured party is an employee the procedure for work related injury should be followed as per MHDS Policy #5.023 Work Incurred Injuries and Worker's Compensation.
2. The Infection Control Committee will monitor the use of all pet therapy animals and make recommendations to the administration regarding the continuation of such programs.
  3. Therapy animals will not have access to areas where food is prepared or served.

### C. Emotional Supportive Animals

1. Emotional Supportive Animals must fulfill the Department of Justice's title III regulations to be considered Service Animals and admitted agency buildings.
2. Emotional support animals that do not qualify as Service Animals under the Department of Justice's Title II regulation may nevertheless qualify as permitted reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities under the FHA and the ACAA.
3. Consumers and staff members who wish to have emotional supportive pets considered for reasonable accommodation may apply for such accommodation.

4. If the reasonable accommodation for the use of an emotional supportive animal is granted, the owner must follow all aforementioned elements of this policy indicated for Service Animals.