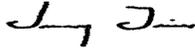


	<h1>Policy</h1>	Section Accessibility	Number 29-002
Service Animals	Original Effective Date December 2009		
	Review/Revised Date(s) Apr. 17/12, Jan.31/13, August 2014		
	Next Review Date: August 2017		
Authorization: Director of Corporate Affairs	 Signature:		

### Preamble

Service animals are animals specifically trained to assist people with disabilities in their activities of independent living (refer to Accessibility Policy 29-001). They are not considered to be pets but rather an auxiliary aid similar to the use of a cane, crutch or wheelchair.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline practices and procedures in place at the Hospital related to service animals.

### Policy

Service animals are permitted within South Huron Hospital Association (SHHA; the Hospital) in areas commonly accessed by the public. A patient accompanied by a service animal is not required to disclose the nature of their disability. In areas where by law service animals are not permitted, SHHA staff and affiliates will provide alternate means of assistance to ensure that the person still has accessibility to our goods and services.

As per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 – O.Reg 429/07 section 4 (Use of service animals or support persons), an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,

- (a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (b) if the person provides a letter from a physicians or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Example of service animals include:

- A guide animal, trained by authorized vendors to service for mobility, individuals who are visually impaired and/or blind.
- A hearing animal, trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound occurs, such as a knock on the door or fire alarm.
- Special skills animals, trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health disability. Duties may include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after a fall, emotional support, etc. Service animals sometimes are called assistance animals.

- A seizure response animal is trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. The animal's service depends on the person's needs. The animal may go for help, or may stand guard over the person during a seizure. Some animals have learned to predict and warn the person.
- A companion animal or emotional support animal is an animal that assists persons with physiological disabilities. Emotional support animals can help alleviate symptoms such as depression, anxiety, stress and difficulties regarding social interactions, allowing individuals to live independently and fully use and enjoy their living environment.

### Supervision

The service animal must be supervised and the handler/designate must retain full control of the animal at all times.

### Awareness Training

Hospital staff should be aware of the following while caring for a patient who is accompanied by a service animal.

- Do not pet or touch a service animal. Petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from the task at hand.
- Do not feed a service animal. The service animal may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill.
- Do not deliberately startle a service animal. Do not separate or attempt to separate a patient from his or her service animal. Avoid making noises at the animal (barking, whistling, etc)
- Converse with the owner/handle, not the animal. Avoid eye contact with the animal.
- Avoid initiating conversation about the service animal, the patient's disabilities or other service animals one has known. If you are curious you may ask if the patient/handler would like to discuss it, but be aware that many persons with disabilities do not care to share personal details.
- Remember, not all disabilities are visible. The nature of the person's disability is a private matter, and you are not entitled to inquire for details.
- Service animals may wear specialized identifiable harnesses or vests. All service animals/users have identification cards.
- Staff caring for the patient shall make provisions for the service animal to go outside and relieve itself.

### Departments Affected

All Hospital employees, volunteers and any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the Hospital in accordance with the legislation.

### Definitions

#### **Disability:**

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing

impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or remedial appliance or device.

- b) a condition of mental impairment or a development disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Service Animal:** An animal described in subsection 4(9) of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Guide Dog:** Guide dog is defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* and means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulation.

### References

The Ottawa Hospital Accessibility Policy, December 17, 2012  
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ont. Reg. 191-11)  
Bill 103, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005 (AODA)