

# Animal Assisted Activity Team **Assignment Guidelines**



12/14/23

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## **Animal Assisted Activity Program Mission**

Lift the spirits of Doylestown Health patients, visitors, associates, and volunteers through interactions with qualified therapy dogs.



Dogs connect in ways humans cannot.

## **Animal Assisted Activity Benefits**

A therapy dog handler has the pleasure of seeing people smile when they meet their therapy dog and hearing comments like this on every visit to Doylestown Hospital: “Your dog was the highlight of my day.”

Interacting with a therapy dog can provide a distraction from pain and a respite from worry. The companionship of a therapy dog can be calming and help counter feelings of loneliness.

A visit from a therapy dog can be a mood booster because petting a therapy dog can stimulate physiological change. Touching a therapy dog can decrease the release of the stress hormone cortisol and boost the release of endorphins, serotonin, and oxytocin which are feel-good brain chemicals. Petting a dog can lower stress-related increases in heart rate and lower the blood pressure of both the human and the dog.

Most people are animal lovers who have or had a beloved pet in their life. Seeing a therapy dog in a hospital unlocks pleasant memories of times with best friends in addition to the pure joy of spending time with an adorable, friendly, well-mannered therapy dog.

Sharing your therapy dog with a member of the Doylestown Hospital community not only makes a difference in how a person feels during your visit; a therapy dog interaction creates an upbeat topic of conversation and a pleasant memory.

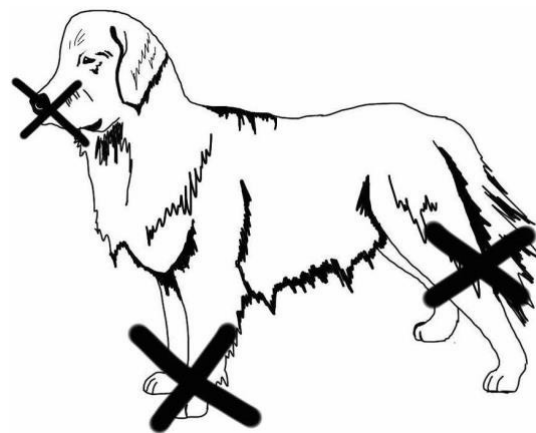
Therapy dogs bask in the attention they receive in the hospital and their lives are enriched by the range of their socialization experiences in the hospital. Handlers strengthen their bond with and respect for their dog and see what a difference an interaction with their dog makes in how someone feels.

## Handling Procedures

1. To keep the therapy dog team and the Doylestown Hospital Community safe, all therapy dog team volunteers must follow the policies of the CDC, Doylestown Hospital, and their pet therapy organization. Keep in mind compliance is required for pet therapy insurance to be in force.
2. It is the responsibility of the handler – the individual who is registered with the therapy dog as a team -- to maintain control of the therapy dog at all times while on the premises of Doylestown Hospital.
3. Therapy dogs must be leashed and the leash held by the handler at all times unless the therapy dog is in a carrier.
4. It is not appropriate for anyone other than the registered, insured handler to hold the therapy dog's leash.
5. The therapy dog's leash should be loose rather than taut. A tight leash indicates that a dog is pulling and not under the control of the handler.
6. The therapy dog should be next to its handler. A leash can be a safety hazard when a dog is out of position.
7. While in hallways, heel your dog close to a wall to provide space for others to pass by.
8. Only the handler may pick up a therapy dog.
9. Handlers must supervise every animal interaction and prioritize the well-being, safety, and comfort of their animal. Handlers are expected to monitor their dog throughout their visits and to be alert for indications of stress, fatigue, thirst, hunger, overheating, or the need/urge to eliminate. If using calming techniques (including, but not limited to, changing the dog's position, taking the dog away from the potential source of stress, or taking the dog outside) does not remedy a dog's discomfort, the day's visit should end immediately, without regard for planned length of the visit.
10. Handlers should take action to prevent – or, if necessary, immediately stop – activity that might increase the likelihood of frightening, harming, or arousing their therapy dog, or causing accidental harm to anyone interacting with the therapy dog.
11. When entering a patient's room, pause and carefully observe the patient. Take time to notice the medical equipment and devices in a patient's room as well as the patient's situation, then plan the safest way to approach the patient with your therapy dog.
12. Approach patients from the bedside that provides safest and easiest access, ideally, the side where the patient is not compromised (example: limb bandaged) and where there are not any invasive devices such as intravenous (IV) catheters. Prevent the therapy dog from having contact with any catheter insertion sites, breaks in the skin, bandage materials, or other compromised body sites. Prevent your therapy dog from contact with any invasive medical devices such as IV lines and catheters.
13. Use particular care to prevent allowing a therapy dog to be touched on inappropriate body sites (mouth, nose, feet, perianal region).
14. The way you position your dog can keep your dog safe by preventing an unsteady hand from touching your dog's face or rear. The position of your dog can also prevent your dog from licking. Placing your dog in a sit or stand next to the person they are visiting or facing out rather than eye-to-eye with a person which protects your dog's eyes and keeps your dog's mouth away from temptation.
15. Small therapy dogs who weigh 20 pounds or less may be placed on a patient's bed or lap only if the patient desires that, and the handler feels it is both safe and appropriate. Placing a small dog in a bed or chair facing out rather than eye-to-eye is safe practice.



**Hold onto your dog's leash at all times. When you let go of that leash, you let go of your pet therapy insurance.**



**Letting someone know where your dog likes to be touched is a kind way to direct people away from your dog's mouth, feet, and back end.**

16. A linen barrier (clean pillowcase or small towel) should be placed on the bed or patient's lap before a small dog is carefully placed in a safe position. Consider the patient's situation before putting the therapy dog into position. Hold your dog's leash and remain next to the patient throughout the visit.
17. A handler should place a linen barrier (pillowcase or towel) on the bed if a large dog is going place its head on the bed to make it easier for a patient to reach. Dogs that weigh more than 15 pounds should not be on a patient's bed.  
Clean linen is available near nursing stations, either in a closet or a linen trolley.  
Fresh linen should be used for every interaction.  
Used linen should be placed in the used linen bin in the patient's room on the way out of the patient's room. If you have an "extra" pillowcase at the end of your visit, place it in a used linen bin.
18. Therapy dogs should not be standing, sitting or lying directly on chairs or other furniture in a patient room or elsewhere the hospital.
19. A handler can sit in a chair next to a patient's bed with their medium-sized or small dog in their lap. When you sit with a patient, you are signaling your interest. Some chairs can be moved close enough to a patient's bed for the patient to safely reach and pet a therapy dog. Do not encourage or facilitate moving a patient to pet a therapy dog. Bring the dog within reach or let the patient simply enjoy seeing the therapy dog.
20. Therapy dog interactions need not involve petting the therapy dog. Seeing a therapy dog and talking about pets brings pleasure. Watching a therapy dog do a simple trick like "spin" is fun.
21. Encourage your therapy dog while you visit. Praise your dog verbally for doing a good job. Your touch is reassuring and motivating to your dog.
22. Give your dog as many breaks as necessary.
23. Use of treats by handlers during a hospital visit is discouraged. While visiting in the hospital, therapy dogs should focus on people, not food, and be motivated/rewarded by human interaction and pleasing their handler.
24. Handlers should not allow a patient, visitor, or staff member to feed or treat their dog. This policy will keep your dog safe from unknown/inappropriate food, minimize proximity of your dog's teeth to fingers, and eliminate the risk of someone misinterpreting how a dog takes treat as a bite. Many people do not understand -- or are not physically able -- to offer a treat with a flat, open palm presented at the dog's chest level.
25. Volunteers should not respond to any medical questions and should not provide food or water to any patient. Instead, tell the person who asks a medical question or requests food or water that you will ask a nearby staff member to respond to the question/request and then let a nearby staff member know about the question/request.
26. If you see a medical situation that you think may require immediate attention, notify nearby staff.
27. Animal Assisted Activity volunteers should prevent and avoid interaction between animals while on the grounds of any Doylestown Health campus. Service dogs are sometimes in the hospital and there are occasions when a patient has a doctor's order (Rx) that allows a visit from a pet dog. Avoid or leave the area if you see another animal. If your only option is to pass by, get your dog's complete attention and heel carefully; do not pause to interact. Pick up your small dog if that's practical.
28. Avoid cell phone use and participating in other activities that divert attention from animal interactions.
29. If the dog is facing a different direction than its handler, the dog is typically communicating "let's go" and the handler should respond to the dog's need to leave.
30. If you feel it's appropriate to end a visit for any reason, it's time to end the visit.
31. Handlers may use the hand sanitizer on the wall outside a patient's room after a visit.
32. After visiting, give your dog positive reinforcement, personal attention, adequate nutrition, bathing/cleaning as appropriate, and rest.

## Canine Body Language

1. Handlers should monitor their dog for body language cues prior to, during, and immediately after each visit. Respect what your dog is telling you and respond to body language cues. Avoidance behaviors that indicate a dog is anxious and/or wishes to stop or get away from what's happening can include excessive sniffing, inattention, turning head, turning body, moving away, hiding behind a person or object, barking, retreating, and submissive rolling.
2. Displacement behaviors are indications of stress exhibited when a dog feels internal conflict, or is uncomfortable, or afraid. Displacement body language can be typically normal, yet out of context behavior, such as yawning, lip/nose licking, scratching/ biting at paws, biting at other objects, or a wet dog shake when dry. Other signs of dog anxiety can include tucked tail, excessive panting, restlessness/pacing, dilated pupils, tense muscles around eyes/mouth, low body posture/shifting weight to back end, rounded back, excessive shedding, excessive whining/vocalization, ears pinned back, and "whale eye" (displaying whites of the eye).
3. Arousal behaviors (precursors to barking, pulling, jumping up, aggression, and other behaviors inappropriate in a hospital) can include play bow, staring, slow tail wag, muscle tenseness, hackles raised, body leaning forward, high-pitched growling and barking.
4. Evaluate your dog based on an examination of your dog's entire body and the situation.
5. If you see your dog exhibiting displacement, avoidance, anxiety, arousal, or other warning behaviors, leave the area/situation immediately. Take your dog to a quiet area and soothe him/her. Give the animal a break outdoors and/or end the visit immediately based on your dog's needs and behavior.
6. Pet Partners offers an excellent online canine body language course. You need not be a Pet Partners member to take that course. <https://petpartners.org/learn/online-education/canine-body-language-course/>



This dog's body language shows that he is happy and ready to visit.



This dog's body language indicates stress and the need to end the visit. Take a break and soothe your dog when you first see a signal that your dog may be uncomfortable with a situation. Be your dog's advocate and prioritize safety.

## Guidelines for Appropriate Interactions

1. Customize every Animal Assisted Activity interaction experience based on human needs and preferences as well as the characteristics of the therapy dog. A patient who does not want to pet an animal may want to look at the therapy dog and talk about the animal, for example.
2. Introduce your dog by name. Do not introduce yourself and prompt a patient to introduce themselves. Avoid any discussion that could compromise patient confidentiality. Keep the focus on your dog. Encourage dialog about pets and animals. Asking if a person if they ever had a pet often leads patients to pleasant memories. Talk about your dog in a way that prompts questions and engages interest. Describing your dog's breed, rescue, age, weight, diet, tricks, and favorite activities can stimulate conversation.
3. It is a conflict of interest and inappropriate to mention a current or past profession or employer. When you are in the hospital with your dog, you are representing Doylestown Health's therapy dog team.



4. Regardless of your background or profession, when you are volunteering in the hospital, you are acting as an Animal Assisted Activity volunteer. Under no circumstances should you offer medically-related observations, advice, or recommendations.
5. All clinical questions from patients, families, or visitors should be referred to clinical associates.
6. In the event that you encounter a medical emergency, or suspect a medical emergency:
  - a. Dial 2222 immediately and keep your dog under your control while you make the call.
  - b. Leave the area with your dog and report the emergency to the first clinical associate you encounter.
7. Always be sensitive to the individual's medical and emotional situation. For example, conclude visits with a remark like "It was a pleasure to meet you" rather than comments that are not sensitive to a person in a hospital. "Have a nice day" or "Hope you feel better" are not appropriate when speaking to a person with a serious injury or illness. Don't refer to a person that you are visiting as a patient; respect each person as an individual.
8. Be alert for cues that signal the desire to end the visit. "Thank you" is often a polite dismissal. A break in eye contact can also signal desire to end an interaction.
9. Give anyone who wants to touch your therapy dog hand sanitizer **after** they touch your dog.
10. Make your offers of hand sanitizer in a kind and friendly way. You can say, "This is one of the ways we keep everyone safe and follow CDC guidelines" or "How about a squirt of hand wash?"
11. If a person has difficulty applying hand sanitizer, you may assist or ask a clinical person to do that.
12. Wash/sanitize you own hands frequently.
13. **Respect HIPPA/confidentiality policy.**
  - a. Protect privacy by strict adherence to confidentiality.
  - b. Never ask anyone their name.
  - c. Introduce your dog but not yourself.
  - d. Do not ask any questions about anyone's medical condition or personal situation.
  - e. The only medically-related question that is appropriate to ask is whether or not it is appropriate to interact with a therapy dog.
14. Do **not** use your phone or camera to take photos of you or your therapy dog with patients, visitors, volunteers, or staff.
15. Others may take a photograph of your therapy dog with your consent.
16. If requested, you may take a photograph of your therapy dog with a patient, visitor, volunteer, or staff using the requesting person's camera or phone, but not with your phone or camera. When taking a photo with the requesting person's phone, be sure that no other patient or identifying information is in the photo. Be vigilant about HIPAA and confidentiality.
17. All volunteers are expected to reflect the SERVICE values of Doylestown Health:
  - We **Serve** the community
  - We strive for **Excellence** in our services and programs
  - We **Respect** the dignity and privacy of all
  - We provide **Value** through high quality, accessible services
  - We seek **Innovation** and integration for continuous improvement
  - We are **Compassionate**
  - We are committed to the health and wellness **Education** of our community



Most patients and visitors in a hospital would probably rather not be there. People are in pain and missing loved ones. Choose your words with care.

18. In the event that you discover a fire, dial 5555.
19. Practice fire safety policy per RACE acronym:
  - Rescue** – Remove and/or assist in the removal of those patients who may be in immediate danger. Patients should be moved away from the fire beyond fire and smoke doors.
  - Alarm** – Every fire must be reported, regardless of the type or extent. Volunteers should know where each fire alarm pull station is located in their assigned areas and how to operate them.
  - Dial 5555 for the hospital operator, tell him/her WHERE the fire is located, WHAT is the type and extent and WHO is calling.
  - Contain** – Reduce the spread of fire and smoke by closing all doors and windows, turning off all fans and air conditioners.
  - Evacuate & Extinguish** – by using the closest proper fire extinguisher on the fire as directed. In case of a fire, remember: An alarm will signal the location of a fire. The elevators will not be in use. Never shout FIRE!

### **Therapy Dog Team Escorts**

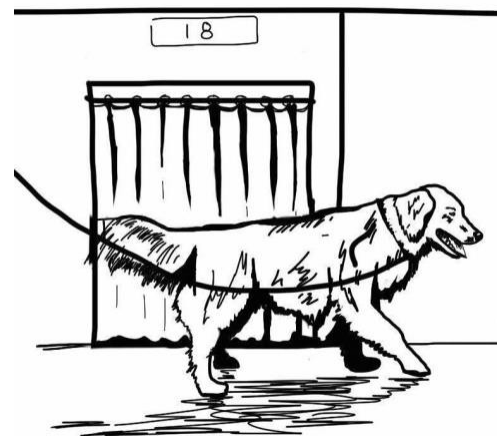
1. An Animal Assisted Activity Team consists of one registered pet therapy team: one Handler and one therapy dog registered with that Handler. The team also must include an adult trained as a Doylestown Hospital therapy team escort if Doylestown Hospital or the therapy team’s registration organization requires an escort. Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs requires its teams to have an escort on all visits to Doylestown Hospital.
2. Doylestown Hospital requires all Animal Assisted Activity handlers who are younger than age 18 to be accompanied at all times by an adult trained at Doylestown Hospital as a therapy dog team escort.
3. A handler may choose to be accompanied by an escort from the Doylestown Hospital’s Animal Assisted Activity team even if the handler’s certification organization does not require an Escort.
4. Handler and escort responsibilities include the following:

<b>Handler</b>	<b>Escort</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
X		Manage behavior of therapy dog
X		Manage interaction with therapy dog
X		Hold therapy dog’s leash
	X	Determine if a visit is appropriate
	X	Obtain consent to visit
	X	Introduce therapy dog
	X	Provide/dispose of linen barriers
	X	Move tray tables, chairs as appropriate
	X	Offer a therapy dog trading card
	X	Provide hand sanitizer after every interaction

5. If the handler and therapy dog are not accompanied by an escort, the handler performs all escort duties, including:
  - a) Determine whether or not each patient is a candidate for Animal Assisted Activity.
  - b) Make sure the timing is appropriate for a visit.
  - c) Provide and dispose of linen barriers as appropriate.
  - d) Move (and replace) tray tables and chairs to facilitate interactions.
  - e) Offer a therapy dog trading card.
  - f) Provide hand sanitizer to anyone who wants to interact with a therapy dog after they touch the therapy dog. Facilitate use of hand sanitizer if necessary.



6. Give each patient who is a candidate for a visit the option to agree to or decline a visit.
  - a) A handler who is not required to have an escort should ask for the patient's consent at the maximum distance possible from a patient, ideally from the doorway.
  - b) An escort should ask for consent before a handler and therapy dog enter a patient room.
7. Handlers with a small dog (who weighs less than 15 pounds) should assess whether or not it's feasible to carefully place a small therapy dog in bed next to a patient. If there is a spot where there's enough room for a little therapy dog in a spot that is not problematic for a patient, the handler should ask whether the person would prefer to look at the therapy dog or have the therapy dog visit them in their bed.
8. It is the responsibility of the handler to carefully place a small dog in a patient's bed. Facing the dog away from the patient is a safe practice.
9. It is the responsibility of the registered, insured handler, not the escort or staff, to manage the behavior of the therapy dog.
10. Only the handler may hold their therapy dog's leash anywhere on the grounds of Doylestown Hospital.
11. In the event of an animal bite or scratch, it's up to the handler to immediately inform nursing staff who will provide or facilitate appropriate clinical care. A witnessing staff member should file a Problem Event Form.
12. The handler must report any animal incident to the Volunteer Office as well as the registration organization. Incidents include, but are not limited to, bites, scratches, excessive barking, and destructive behavior.
13. No Animal Assisted Activity handler may hold the leash of, or otherwise handle, any dog other than the Handler's own registered therapy dog on the Doylestown Health campus.
14. No escort may hold the leash of or otherwise handle any registered therapy dog on the Doylestown Health Campus.
15. Handlers must control their dog's leash during any rest room visit.
16. A Doylestown Hospital handler may be an escort for another team. While functioning as an escort, a handler may not be accompanied by his/her own therapy dog.
17. The following individuals may accompany a handler and the handler's registered therapy dog on an Animal Assisted Activity visit:
  - The handler's escort
  - Members of the Doylestown Health Animal Assisted Activity program for training, observation, and/or evaluation purposes
  - Prospective members of the therapy team with clearance for observation/training from Volunteer Services and a signed Commitment to Confidentiality form (provided in Appendix).
  - Staff members cleared for observation of the Animal Assisted Activity by Volunteer Services.



**Please don't promise a visit. Not all patients can interact with therapy dogs due to contact precautions. Sometimes patients are not available because they are sleeping or due to testing, medical consultations, or treatments.**

## **Visiting Venues**

1. Animal Assisted Activity Handlers are expected to visit with their dog in their pre-determined scheduled visiting destination(s).
2. Areas of Doylestown Hospital that may be visited by therapy dog teams include:
  - Patient rooms on 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor North and 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor South, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor West, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor East and 4<sup>th</sup> Floor West
  - Moss Rehab
  - Business offices on the first floor: Human Resources, Pastoral Care, Volunteer Services
  - Administrative offices on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor above Main Lobby
  - Accounting/Billing and Medical Records on the ground floor
  - The Doylestown Hospital Cancer Institute and Penn Radiation Oncology in the Pavilion Building
  - Non-surgical patients in IVU which is located on the second floor of the Cardiovascular and Critical Care Pavilion (Cardiac building). This unit is located on the left as you enter the unit on the second floor. Teams NOT permitted in CVICU which is located if you turn right as you enter the unit.
  - The following waiting areas:
    - Fred Bean Family Waiting Area in the Cardiovascular and Critical Care Pavilion
    - The Hirt Visiting Room near the IVU in the Cardiovascular and Critical Care Pavilion
    - Main lobby entrance area
    - Lab testing waiting area on 1<sup>st</sup> floor, near info desk/coffee bar
    - Same Day Service waiting areas on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor above Main Lobby
    - Maternity waiting room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor South
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor West
    - Moss Rehab 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor
    - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor West
3. Children who stay overnight at Doylestown Hospital are not, unfortunately, candidates for therapy dog visits due to contact precautions in place to keep our children safe.
  - a) No adult or child in the ICU can be visited by a therapy dog.
  - b) Infection precaution policy does not permit therapy dog teams to visit a child who has recently had surgery. Since virtually all children staying overnight in a patient room have recently had surgery, our teams should not visit any child in a patient room who is younger than 18 years of age.  
Ask a staff member if you have any question about whether or not a patient is younger than 18.
4. Therapy dog teams are encouraged to interact with children waiting for testing or in the hospital to visit family and friends. Be sure to get consent from the accompanying adult prior to interacting with a child.
5. Teams are encouraged to go directly to patient areas first and then to visit with staff, volunteers, and visitors in public areas following patient visits.
6. Avoid all off-limits areas and do not agree to any visit requested in a restricted area.

## **Off-Limits Sections of the Hospital**

1. Therapy dog teams may not visit any Contact Precaution room in any area of the hospital. Protect yourself and your dog by avoiding all patient rooms with any type of contact precaution sign, including Droplet, Airborne, Contact or Enhanced Contact, Strict Isolation Precautions, or Novel Respiratory Precaution.
2. Therapy Dog Teams may not visit any area not specifically mentioned in this document as an area where animal teams may visit.
3. At this time, therapy dog teams **may not visit** any of the following areas:
  - a) ICU
  - b) CVICU rooms in the Cardiovascular and Critical Care Pavilion
  - c) Operating rooms, recovery rooms, cardiac catheterization suites, and endoscopy suites
  - d) Imaging areas on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor: MRI Center, CT Scan, Interventional Radiology, Ultrasound & Nuclear Medicine
  - a) Women's Health
  - b) Silverman Community Health Clinic (ground floor)
  - c) Rehab areas on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor: Cardiac, Pulmonary, Hand, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy
  - d) Maternity, including in-patient rooms, neonatal, and newborn nurseries
  - e) Emergency Room and ER waiting area
  - f) Wound Care and Wound Care waiting area on first floor
  - g) Any patient lavatory
  - h) All food preparation areas
  - i) Pharmacy, including medication storage and preparation areas
  - j) Clean linen storage rooms
  - k) Clean/sterile supply storage areas
  - l) Any area in the Pavilion Building other than Penn Radiation Oncology and the Doylestown Hospital Cancer Institute.
4. Avoid the North elevators (near the windows) used for patient transport.

## **Contraindications for Contact with Animals: *applies to all hospital areas and all teams***

1. Teams may not visit any patient room labeled for any contact precaution including: Droplet, Airborne, Contact or Enhanced Contact, or Strict Isolation Precautions.
2. If there is a paper sign outside a patient room that indicates there is a neutropenic patient, do not enter that room. There is no "official" neutropenia sign which explains the paper sign. Persons who are neutropenic are most often receiving chemotherapy.
3. Avoid contact with any patient whom a staff member says not to visit. The charge nurse can be consulted to identify patients who may not participate in animal assisted activity, including those with allergy, fear of animals, aggressive behavior, open wounds, neutropenia, HIV infection, immunoglobulin deficiencies, isolation restrictions, illnesses that can be transmitted to animals. Patients with a tracheostomy may be seen only if the tracheostomy site is covered with oxygen administration tubing or capped.
4. Staff members, visitors, volunteers, and patients must be asked whether or not they would like to meet a dog and only those who say, "yes" are appropriate for interaction. While the vast majority love spending time with a therapy dog, be observant and ready for the possibility that you may need to wrap a visit quickly because of how a person responds to the therapy dog.
5. Respect the decision of all who choose not to interact because they are allergic, fearful, busy, or simply not in the mood.
6. Postpone visits with patients who are in consultation with medical professionals, eating, on the telephone, or involved in activity that is best left uninterrupted.

7. If there is an unusual or unpleasant smell in a patient room or any other condition with the potential to disturb your therapy dog, avoid that room. Notify a staff member if you have a concern about a smell or other issue.
8. If there is any doubt in your mind about whether or not to visit an area or a patient, do NOT make the visit.

### **Consent & Potential Visiting Candidates**

1. Determine whether or not a patient is a candidate for Animal Assisted Activity **prior** to seeking consent.
2. Animal Assisted Activity is not permitted with patients with any contraindication for contact with animals. Rooms marked to indicate any type of contact precaution may not be entered by any member of the therapy dog team. If there is a COVID-19 patient in the Hospital, their room is off-limits to therapy dog teams and will be identified with Novel contact precaution signage.
3. Nursing staff can be consulted to identify other patients who may not participate in animal assisted activity, including those with an allergy or fear of animals, open wounds, neutropenia, HIV infection, immunoglobulin deficiencies, or an illness that can be transmitted to animals. Patients with a tracheotomy may be seen only if the tracheotomy is covered with oxygen or capped.
4. Nurses can also identify those suffering with a mental illness, patients with aggressive behavior, and those suffering from confusion who might not do well or would not enjoy an interaction with a therapy dog, as well as those who would especially enjoy or benefit from an interaction with a therapy dog.
5. Verbal consent is required prior to interacting with any visitor, volunteer, or staff anywhere on the campus as well as with patients. If an adult asks you if they can meet or touch/pet your therapy dog, that is consent. Otherwise, ask, “Would you like to meet my therapy dog?”
6. A signed permission slip must be in place before visiting a child under 18 years old in an inpatient room. Nursing staff will ask parents/guardians to sign the permission slip as part of the admission process.
7. Before any therapy dog interacts with a child on the hospital grounds who is not an inpatient, verbal consent is required from the adult accompanying the child. The child must also consent via a verbal OK or body language signal. Allow the child to approach the dog.
8. Keep in mind that some people choose not to interact with an animal because it is one of the few decisions they may make in a hospital setting. Respect the wishes of each person graciously.
9. Postpone visits with patients who are in consultation with medical professionals, eating, on the telephone, or involved in an activity that is best left uninterrupted.
10. Visitors in patient rooms should, when possible, be given the option to interact with the therapy dog.
11. Before entering an elevator with an animal, ask the passengers for permission. Do not enter an elevator if any passenger expresses reluctance or appears apprehensive.

Dogs should be either carried or placed in a “sit” or “down” while in the elevator and should exit the elevators slowly, being mindful of the need not to startle or approach without asking permission when the elevator door opens.



**Respect what people say with body language or words about their desire to interact with your therapy dog.**

## **Infection Prevention**

1. **Always** carry hand sanitizer. Bottles of hand sanitizer are available at the Volunteer Services office.
2. Handlers should require use of hand hygiene **after** a person has touched your therapy dog.
3. Volunteers should personally use hand sanitizer before and after patient visits.
4. Volunteers should avoid direct contact (touch) with patients, visitors and staff.
5. Handlers must prevent animals from coming into contact with sites of invasive devices, open or bandaged wounds, surgical incisions, or other breaches in the skin, or medical equipment.
6. Before a small dog (who weighs less than 15 pounds) can be placed on the bedside or a patient's lap, the handler should check for visible soiling of bed linens. Do not place a small dog on the bed or lap if soiling is present.
7. Provide a barrier of fresh hospital linen for each patient when it is appropriate for a small dog to be on a patient's lap or bedside, or for a large dog who places his head on a bed for easy access for the patient.
8. Fresh linen should be used for each patient. A pillowcase, sheet, or towel may only be used for one patient.
9. Place hospital linen that has been used in the dirty linen bin on the way out of a patient's room.
10. If a dog has contact with surface of the bed, advise staff that the linen should be laundered and replaced.
11. Use a lint roller if your therapy dog sheds.
12. Handlers may not sit or perch on a patient's bed, but may sit on a chair.
13. Prevent therapy dogs from licking patients, visitors, and staff via training and by positioning the dog in a way that prevents licking. Topical medication can be dangerous for dogs and licking or "kisses" are unwanted by some people. The CDC does not permit therapy animals to lick.
14. Discourage patients, visitors, and staff from "shaking hands" with therapy dogs who obviously recently walked outdoors and on hospital floors.
15. For the protection of the patient and your dog, do not allow patients or visitors to feed your therapy dog. Your dog's reward is the interaction.

## **Doylestown Hospital COVID Policy for Therapy Dog Teams**

To keep you, your therapy dog, and the Doylestown Hospital community safe, Doylestown Hospital requires compliance with the current policies of your certifying agency as well as compliance with the current COVID-19 policies of Doylestown Hospital.

Take time to know your therapy agency policies via their website, a phone call, and/or member handbook, newsletters and emails.

Karen Langley [klangley@dh.org](mailto:klangley@dh.org) Director of Volunteer Services 215-345-2204, provides updates to volunteers on Doylestown Hospital's current COVID policy, including any masking requirements. Current COVID policy reflects community conditions and presently include the following:

1. Anyone petting or having contact with a therapy dog should wash/sanitize their hands after every contact.
2. Do not allow therapy animals to lick or give "kisses."
3. Individuals may wear paper masks if they are more comfortable doing so.
4. Social distancing is always appropriate when feasible.
5. No therapy team visits in any room with a contact precaution sign. If there is a COVID-19 patient in Doylestown Hospital, their room will have Novel Respiratory Precaution contact precaution signage as well as signage that requires gown, N95 mask, eye shield and gloves. No therapy team may enter a patient room with Novel contact precaution signage or any other contact precaution sign.
6. COVID Testing is available offsite at Drive-Thru testing center without a physician order.
7. For Vaccine-specific questions: [COVIDvaccine@dh.org](mailto:COVIDvaccine@dh.org) Use [covid19@dh.org](mailto:covid19@dh.org) to submit COVID-related questions.

## **Volunteer Health & Vaccine Records**

1. All Doylestown Hospital volunteers are required to be vaccinated for COVID-19.
  - COVID-19 vaccines are provided at no charge by Doylestown Health.
2. Therapy dog team volunteers are required to have an annual flu vaccine.
  - Annual flu vaccine are provided at no charge by Doylestown Health.
3. If volunteers receive a COVID or flu vaccine outside the hospital, documentation of receiving the vaccine must be provided to the Volunteer Services Office.
4. Volunteers should provide updated emergency contact information to Volunteer Services on a timely basis.
5. Volunteers should not visit if not feeling well or if exposed to or experiencing contagious disease.
6. Volunteers should self-screen for symptoms of communicable disease and refrain from volunteering while ill. Such symptoms include, but are not limited to:
  - a. New or worsening respiratory symptoms (i.e., cough, sneezing, nasal discharge)
  - b. Fever (temperature >100°F)
  - c. Diarrhea or vomiting
  - d. Conjunctivitis
  - e. Rash, poison ivy, non-intact skin on face or hands

## **Security Clearance Updates**

1. All Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers must maintain current clearances for:
  - PA State Police Criminal Background Clearance
  - FBI Fingerprint Clearance
  - PA Child Abuse Clearance for Adults
2. PA State Law requires these clearances to be repeated every five years.
3. Doylestown Health obtains PA Criminal Record Clearance updates.  
Volunteers get direction on how to update the FBI Fingerprint Clearance and PA Child Abuse Clearance.
4. Doylestown Health reimburse volunteers for repeat clearances for any AAA Volunteers who have completed 36 unsupervised visits.
5. Volunteers are reminded via email and messages during sign-in when it's time to pursue record updates.

## **Therapy Dog Record Updates**

1. All volunteers must agree to abide by Doylestown Health policies and procedures.
2. The Animal Assisted Activity Program requires team members to provide Volunteer Services Office with documents that show your therapy dog membership is current and your vet care is up-to-date. Organizations who evaluate and accredit hospitals, such as the Joint Commission, audit hospital records and Doylestown Hospital sincerely appreciates the time you take to maintain your records.
3. You will be reminded via email and at the sign-in computer when you visit when you'll need to provide updates for therapy dog records and security clearances.
  - Pet therapy membership card
    - Alliance of Therapy Dogs [formerly Therapy Dogs Inc.]: 877-843-7364; <https://www.therapydogs.com>
    - Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs: 888-738-5770 <https://golden-dogs.org>
    - Comfort Caring Canines: <https://www.comfortcaringcanines.org>
    - KPets: 888-685-7387; <https://kpets.org>
    - Pet Partners: 425-679-5500; <https://petpartners.org>
    - Therapy Dogs International: 973-252-9800; <https://tdi-dog.org/default.aspx>
  - Your pet therapy membership card shows the date that your membership expires.

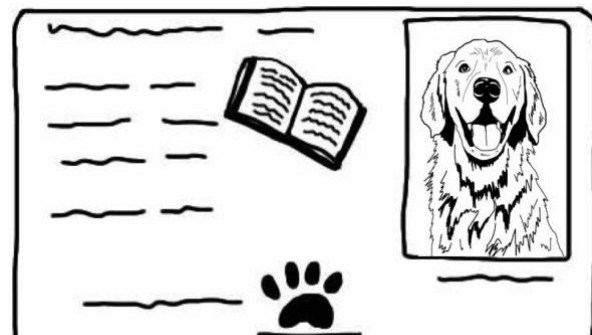


Your pet therapy membership card is not the certificate you received when you earned your pet therapy certification

- Vet records (using the Doylestown Hospital Veterinary Record Form provided in the Appendix) that documents annual veterinary examination and administration and expiration dates of rabies vaccination, DHPP or DHLPP vaccination (or titer), and annual negative fecal exam. We suggest keeping a Vet Form in your car so it's handy when you take your dog to the vet.
- Either proof of current heartworm blood test with expiration date on the Vet Form OR an attestation statement by handler that their therapy dog receives monthly preventative heartworm medication
- Dog license as required by state law

### **Dress Code, ID, Backpack, Leashes**

1. Animal Assisted Activity volunteers must wear a Doylestown Health shirt or jacket with long black or khaki pants and sneakers or other flat, rubber-soled shoes.
2. Please refrain from the use of cologne, perfume, and scented products to respect patients who may be sensitive to scents.
3. Doylestown Health photo-IDs must be worn by Handlers and Escorts.
  - ID badges are created and provided as part of the orientation process for human volunteers.
  - Therapy dogs get an ID badge when the handler and therapy dog have completed the mentoring process.
  - Animal team volunteers should display the human and therapy dog volunteer IDs on the lanyard provided by Doylestown Hospital.
4. Handlers must have a copy of their current therapy organization membership card in their possession at all times when their therapy dog is in the hospital. We suggest that you place that membership card in the pocket of your lanyard.
5. Teams must conform to the credential display requirements of their pet therapy organization. Your therapy dog should wear the tag or other special identifier required by your therapy organization.
6. We request that your therapy dog wear their Doylestown Hospital scarf.
7. To make it clear that you are a member of the Doylestown Hospital Animal Assisted Activity team, we ask that you use the Doylestown Hospital "Dog's Heal" backpack.
  - We suggest storing your visiting gear in your backpack, including: extra paper mask, hand sanitizer, therapy dog's leash and collar with therapy tag, lanyard with ID badges for you and your dog, Doylestown Hospital bandanna, water bowl/water, poop bags, clean up gear (paper towels, wipes), comb for your dog, lint roller, and personal items (keys, wallet, pen, cell phone which is turned off).
8. Teams must use the leash and collar/harness approved by their certification agency for their dog.
9. Prong collars, pinch collars, chain, and choke collars which may trap and injure patients' fingers are not acceptable at Doylestown Health. Doylestown Health advocates the use of a flat buckle collar.
10. Therapy dogs should not wear any flea or tick collar during visits.
11. Leashes must be non-retractable and no longer than six (6) feet.
12. Clean your gear after every visit.



Prominently display your and your dog's Doylestown Health ID cards for the benefit of patients, visitors, and staff, including security professionals. Your pet therapy organization also requires you to have your certification card with you when you visit.

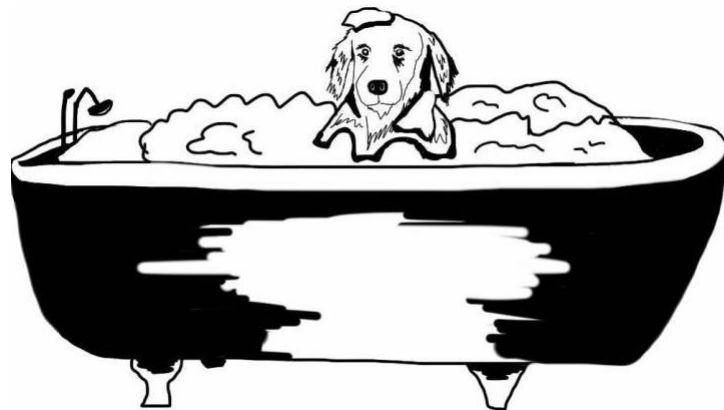


## **Scheduling**

1. Teams are requested to make one visit per week and required to make a minimum of one visit per month, on average, over the course of twelve months.
2. Handlers sign up for a specific visiting schedule through the Volunteer Services Office. Visiting schedule specifies day(s), week(s), and time; for example, “first and third Tuesdays between 2pm and 3:30pm.”
3. Handlers sign up for a 90-minute window with the understanding that they will visit with their dog for about an hour within that 90-minute frame. The 90-minute window is meant to provide flexibility for the handler and to respect for extra time that may be needed with a dog prior to entering the hospital.
4. Handlers are expected to commit to their schedule.
5. Contact the Volunteer Office 215-345-2204 or [wyoung@dh.org](mailto:wyoung@dh.org) if you wish to change your established visiting schedule or location on an ongoing basis.
6. One-time changes in scheduling are not feasible.
7. Handlers should email [wyoung@dh.org](mailto:wyoung@dh.org) -- do not call -- if you cannot make a scheduled visit.
8. If a handler cancels a visit, their next visit is their next regularly scheduled date and time.
9. Teams are scheduled and approved to visit multiple specific locations within the hospital with the understanding that it may not be practical to visit all locations on a single visit given variations in patient population and time spent on interactions.
10. Teams must stick to their scheduled time and approved visiting locations for contact tracing and because, for the safety of all, multiple therapy dogs must not be in the same area at the same time.
11. Handlers schedule visit(s) with their escorts.  
Handlers consult the escort list when they have a need for an escort, and then handlers contact escorts directly via phone or email to identify an escort(s) who is available during the handler’s visiting schedule.
12. Handlers and escorts decide if an ongoing partnership as a team is desired after their initial visit(s) together.
13. Handlers advise the Volunteer Office when they have established a visiting partnership with an escort.
14. Escorts follow the schedule of their assigned Handler, making sure they arrive in time to escort the Handler and dog into the hospital. Teams who require an escort may not enter the hospital without an escort.
15. When their usual escort is not available, it is the responsibility of the handler to find another escort or to email [wyoung@dh.org](mailto:wyoung@dh.org) and cancel the visit if the team required to have an escort. The regular escort may agree to find a substitute for the handler.
16. Handlers and escorts must communicate with each other directly about precise arrival times and scheduling changes.
17. Handlers and escorts should contact each other( be sure message is received) if a visit is canceled.

## **Pre-Visit Preparation**

1. Make sure your dog has adequate rest, nutrition, and hydration.
2. Your dog's coat should be brushed or combed before a visit to remove debris and as much loose hair and dander as possible.
3. Your therapy dog's nails should be short and free of sharp edges.
4. Be sure the dog is clean and smells good when visiting. As necessary, bathe the dog with a mild, ideally, unscented hypoallergenic shampoo and allow the dog's coat to dry.
5. Brush the dog's teeth as appropriate.
6. Inspect the dog for fleas and ticks.
7. Visiting animals must be healthy, parasite free, and on a flea control program.
8. Pets may not be treated with a topical medication such as Frontline within 48-hours of a visit.
9. Maintain animal leashes, harnesses, and collars so they are functional as well as visibly clean and odor-free.
10. It's helpful to maintain a visiting bag that includes a paper mask and a back-up paper mask, your ID, your dog's ID, visiting collar and leash, therapy vest or scarf, poop bags, paper towels or wipes, lint roller, hand sanitizer, water and a collapsible water bowl.
11. Transport your groomed therapy dog to the hospital in a clean carrier.
12. Provide your dog with an opportunity to eliminate immediately before entering Doylestown Hospital.
  - a. Handlers may use the grass areas around the hospital's parking lots to potty their dog.
  - b. Use an outdoor trash can to dispose of waste and practice hand hygiene immediately afterward.
13. Make sure your dog is ready to visit before you enter the hospital. Pay careful attention and be responsive to your dog's body language when you put the "therapy clothing" on your dog.
14. Allow enough time for you and your dog to settle before leaving the sign-in area and beginning your visit. Pursue appropriate calming, exercising, or energizing procedures necessary to prepare for a visit. Only visit when and if your dog is ready to visit.



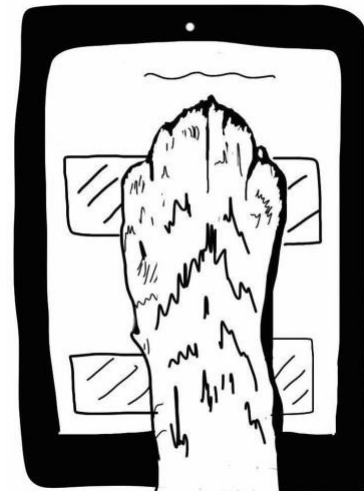
**Take time to make sure your dog looks and smells good before each and every visit.**

## **Parking**

1. Animal Assisted Activity volunteers may park in Parking Lot C, E, G, or H. There are grass areas near the lots where you may potty your dog.
2. Volunteers have the option to park in the parking garage for a fee of \$2 per day. If you can walk and potty your dog before you come to the hospital, the parking garage is a way to stay dry during inclement weather since the garage connects to the main hospital building.

## **Sign-In/Sign Out**

1. A registered therapy animal may be on the grounds of Doylestown Hospital only if they are with their registered Handler acting as an Animal Assisted Activity Volunteer.
2. Handlers may only bring one registered therapy dog who has completed the Doylestown Hospital training process to Doylestown Hospital on a visit even if they have more than one dog who is a member of the Hospital's Animal Assisted Activity program.
3. Escorts and handlers registered with a therapy organization that requires Escorts at all times must:
  - a. Meet outside the Main Entrance of the Hospital.
  - b. If a handler arrives before the Escort, the handler and dog should wait outdoors until the escort arrives.
  - c. Enter the hospital together through the main lobby.
  - d. Sign-in with your volunteer numbers on Doylestown Health electronic system at the computer station near the entrance of the hospital.
  - e. Sign-out at the computer station near the main entrance.
4. The sign-in computer screen provides personalized reminders (due dates for dog's inoculations and licenses and handler's security clearances and therapy organization renewals) as well as room numbers of patients who requested a pet therapy team visit.
5. If a team is interested in earning AKC therapy dog titles, the Volunteer Services Office can write a letter (based on your computerized sign-in records) to submit to the AKC to document your visiting history.



Sign in and sign out on a touch screen kiosk.

## **Animal Incidents**

1. Incidents include, but are not limited to, illness/bodily discharge, bites, scratches, excessive barking/vocalization, destructive behavior, and animal "accident."
2. In the event that an animal becomes ill on a visit and produces any bodily discharge, assist with preliminary clean up, dial 2020 on a house phone and alert housekeeping, then terminate the visit immediately and refrain from visiting for a minimum of one week or as advised by a veterinarian. Submissive urination requires suspending the animal's visiting privileges, having the handler address the underlying cause, and then formally reevaluating the animal's suitability before visiting privileges are restored.

Take appropriate measures to prevent recurrence of an animal "accident" during future visits: prior to visiting observe elimination and exercise; provide food and water appropriately. If repeated "accidents" occur, the animal's visiting privileges will be withdrawn.
3. In the event of an animal bite or scratch or any suspected physical injury, immediately inform nursing staff who will provide or facilitate appropriate clinical care. A Problem Event Form will be filled out by a witnessing staff member.
4. A visit should be immediately terminated after any incident and the handler must:
  - a. Report any animal incident to Volunteer Services as well as the registration organization immediately.
  - b. Inform public health or animal control authorities as required by local laws.
  - c. Contact your therapy registration organization and Volunteer Services immediately if there is any act of aggression by a therapy dog in any venue at any time.
5. Doylestown Hospital has the option to suspend or terminate following the investigation of an incident.
  - a. Bites, intentional scratches, or other serious, inappropriate behavior is cause for permanent withdrawal of the animal's visiting privileges.

- b. In the case of other incidents, contributing circumstances will be considered and appropriate measures, including additional training, may be pursued to prevent similar issues from reoccurring.
  - c. If measures cannot be taken to reduce the risk of recurrence, then visitation privileges will be withdrawn.
  - d. The Volunteer Services Office of Doylestown Hospital requires clearance from the animal's therapy organization and veterinarian before the team resumes therapy visits following an incident or issue.
6. Handlers must suspend visits and have the therapy dog formally reevaluated whenever the handler notices or is apprised of any of the following in the therapy dog:
    - a. A negative behavioral change since the time it was last temperament tested
    - b. Aggressive behavior outside the healthcare setting
    - c. Fearful behavior during visits
    - d. Loss of sight or hearing resulting in an overt inclination to startle and react in an adverse manner

### **Animal Health & Zoonosis**

1. Patient, visitor, volunteer, and staff members should use hand sanitizer after touching a therapy dog.
2. Consider the use of dog cleansing wipes after patient interactions or after visits.
3. Bathe your dog before and after visiting.
4. Clean your gear after visits.
5. Dogs are required to receive a health evaluation by a licensed veterinarian at least once per year and to submit an Animal Assisted Activity Veterinary Record Form signed by their vet at that annual visit to Volunteer Services. A copy of that Vet form is provided in the Appendix.
6. Be compliant with your veterinarian's recommendations regarding an appropriate flea, tick, and enteric parasite control.
7. Cancel a visit if your therapy dog seems unwell or injured.
8. Animals with suspected communicable diseases may not visit.
9. Animals with any contagious or concerning medical conditions should not visit until clinically normal, or the condition is managed and written veterinary health clearance is provided.
10. Zoonosis – diseases that may be communicated from dogs to human – are uncommon and can be prevented by vigilant Handlers.
  - a. Bite or scratch wound: prevented by careful handling by registered, trained therapy dogs
  - b. Rabies: transmitted via bites/open wounds; prevented with required rabies inoculation
  - c. Ringworm: transmitted via contact with skin lesions on a dog; prevented by eliminating visits by any dog suspected of having or diagnosed with ringworm
  - d. Gastrointestinal infection: transmitted when a dog's fecal matter is ingested orally by a human; hand sanitation is essential and preventative; dogs with or suspected of having GI infections should not visit
  - e. Leptospirosis: transmitted via human ingestion of urine or discharge of affected dog; prevented by inoculation and careful handling of registered, trained therapy dogs; no visits by any dog suspected of having or diagnosed with leptospirosis
11. Animals should not visit while demonstrating signs of heat (estrus).
12. Animals who have been fed, within the past 90 days, any raw or dehydrated (but otherwise raw) foods, chews, or treats of animal origin, excluding those that are high-pressure pasteurized, irradiated, or fermented, may not visit patient areas.



**Be conservative. If either you or your dog don't feel well, cancel your visit.**

## **Performance Input & Education**

1. All hospital volunteers (and staff) are evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory on an annual basis. The evaluation form is signed by the volunteer, the volunteer unit chair and the Director of Volunteer Services.
2. After the first year of service, therapy team volunteers are evaluated using the Animal Assisted Activity Therapy Dog Team Competency form.
3. The registered Handler with his/her own registered animal will be evaluated using the Team Evaluation form at least every four years; ideally, an independent evaluator will do that evaluation.
4. When therapy dog-Handler team returns to Doylestown Hospital after an absence of more than four months, their first visit must be an accompanied visit to update the Handler on happenings with the Animal Assisted Activity program at Doylestown Hospital as well as to confirm the performance of the therapy team.
5. Members of the Animal Assisted Activity team are strongly encouraged to attend team meetings which are held approximately twice per year. Team meetings are a forum for feedback, program updates, and educational seminars.

## **Communications & Outreach**

1. Be a proactive communicator. Share your insights, exceptional interactions with patients, problems, potential issues, and suggestions with Karen Langley, Director of Volunteers [klangley@dh.org](mailto:klangley@dh.org) 215-343-2204 and Joyce Rivas, Advisory Chair of the Doylestown Health Animal Assisted Activity Team [joycerivas@comcast.net](mailto:joycerivas@comcast.net) 215-588-9201.
2. Inform Karen Langley, Director of Volunteers [klangley@dh.org](mailto:klangley@dh.org) 215-343-2204 of any inappropriate behavior/activity by visitors, patients, volunteers, or staff.
3. Identify potential Doylestown Health volunteers.
4. Give one of your therapy dog's Doylestown Hospital trading cards to a patient or visitor who clearly want a trading card to remember their visit. Show those interested in joining or supporting the therapy dog program at Doylestown Hospital the web address on the trading card:  
[DoylestownHealth.org/TherapyDogs](http://DoylestownHealth.org/TherapyDogs).

*Hazardous Materials: None.*

*Essential Functions: Animal handling, walking, standing, seeing, kneeling, stooping, reaching, and talking.*

*How to Join the Animal Assisted Activity Team & Assignment Guidelines updates:*

*9/14; 10/14, 12/14; 01/15; 03/15; 08/15; 09/15; 3/16; 7/16, 5/17, 2/20, 6/21, 7/21, 5/22, 11/22, 4/23, 12/23*

# Appendix



## Animal Assisted Activity Veterinary Record

*We appreciate your assistance in completing this form for our handlers so that they may participate in the Animal Assisted Activity Program at Doylestown Health. All of our handlers are volunteers who give their time and talent to our patients, families, visitors, and staff without expectation of monetary compensation.*

**Owner/Handler Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**This certificate certifies that a veterinarian in this practice carefully examined**

**Dog Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **on** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/20\_\_\_

**Sex:** M                      F                      **Breed/mix:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Rabies</b>	Date Given: ___/___/20___	Next Due: ___/___/20___
<b>DHPP Lepto Or Titer</b> <small>If DHPP/DHLPP is not indicated for this dog, please explain why below in Remarks.</small>	Date Given: ___/___/20___	Next Due: ___/___/20___
<b>Fecal</b> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Date Given: ___/___/20___	Next Due: ___/___/20___
<b>Heartworm Test</b> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> <small>If handler treats dog with monthly preventative heartworm medication rather than get a yearly heartworm blood test, handler must complete Attestation form.</small>	Date Given: ___/___/20___	Next Due: ___/___/20___

*I believe this animal is a good candidate to be a therapy dog at Doylestown Hospital. I have not seen any aggressive or inappropriate behavior in my presence. The animal appears to be healthy and free of pain, disabilities and illnesses that can cause unusual behavior that could cause the animal to be unpredictable. To the best of my knowledge, this animal has not been exposed to and is free of any infectious or contagious disease.*

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Licensed Veterinarian \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_





## **Animal Assisted Activity Heartworm Preventative**

### **ATTESTATION**

I hereby attest that I, \_\_\_\_\_,

administer preventative heartworm medication to my therapy dog, \_\_\_\_\_, monthly.

I declare that this statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Updated: 5/2017; 5/2018; 5/2019; 5/2020; 06/2021, 07/2021, 05/2022, 11/2022*