

Policy Title: Pets Visitation at Livingston HealthCare	
Policy Number: IP-13	
Effective Date:	Revision Date:
Manual/Section: IP	
Applicable Catalogs: CAH, RHC, UCC, HCHO, SWB	

Policy Statement

Livingston HealthCare (LHC) patients, staff, and visitors are prohibited from bringing their pets into LHC facilities without prior authorization.

Livingston HealthCare recognizes that a house hold pet may have a therapeutic effect for a patient and does grant pet visitation privileges for its patients in **rare and limited circumstances, on a case-by-case basis**. These rare and limited circumstances are determined by a patient’s attending or primary care physician, allowed under formal medical order, in conjunction with the Livingston HealthCare Infection Prevention and Control staff risk assessment.

Service Animals are not legally considered a household pet. Individuals with disabilities are allowed the accommodation, rights, and responsibilities of *service animals* under the Montana statues and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (see Livingston HealthCare Policy Service Animals at Livingston HealthCare). Service animals and their presence in LHC Facilities are not covered in this policy.

Livingston HealthCare does not have a Therapy Animal program, nor does it currently endorse one.

Definition

- A. **Direct threat:** A significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of a person that cannot be eliminated by modifying polies, practices or procedures or by providing auxiliary aids or services
- B. **Pet therapy:** incorporation of animals as part of the therapeutic or wellness improvement process for patients.
- C. **Service Animal:** A dog or miniature horse 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. Other species of animals are not service animals.
- D. **Uncontrolled behavior:** behavior that is unrestrained, violent, wild, or undisciplined. Examples of uncontrolled behavior in a pet or handler may include, but is not limited to: jumping, lunging, biting, unwarranted and unprovoked behavior, failing to follow commands, running free or fleeing the owner handler, lack of house training.

Guidelines

- A. Prior authorization is required prior to any pet visitation at Livingston HealthCare.
- B. Pet Visitation Application and Guidelines Form will be completed (see attached form) and submitted to the LHC Infection Prevention and Control staff. Provider order and organizational IPIC approval will be documented in the medical record and on the application.
 - a. The signed application by Physician and Infection Prevention and Control staff will act as an access pass.
- C. The animal owner / pet handler must present their signed application at registration desk at the time of visitation in Livingston HealthCare Facilities or when asked to by a LHC staff member.
- D. Only domesticated cats and dogs will be granted visitation privileges.
- E. The pet handler is encouraged to transport the pet to and from the facility as follows:
 - a. in a pet carrier (with collar and short leash), or
 - b. on a non-retractable leash (<7ft long).
- F. The pet handler will remain with the pet at all times during the visit and assumes complete responsibility for the pet's controlled behavior:
 - i. *uncontrolled behavior* or behavior that represents a *direct threat* to the safety of any individual will result in suspension of pet visitation and immediate removal of pet and handler from facility.
- G. Livingston HealthCare reserves the right to terminate the pet visitation for any reason at any time.
- H. Livingston HealthCare strictly prohibits pet visitation in restricted areas or areas where a sterile environment must be maintained. Examples of such areas at LHC include but are not limited to:
 - a. Operating rooms and surgical suites
 - b. The ICU if the patient is in serious or critical condition
 - c. Areas of LHC facilities with patients who have compromised immune systems
 - d. Patient rooms that are under isolation precautions (airborne, droplet, or contact)
 - e. All areas in which masks or gowns must be worn.
 - f. All areas in which clean laundry and food is being processed, stored, and/or served.

Procedure

- A. Any LHC Staff member may provide patients and this visitors with the Pet Visitation Policy and Application, and refer interested parties to Infection Prevention and Control for application review and completion.
 - a. Obtain applicant contact information
 - b. Provided IPIC contact information
- B. Infection Prevention and Control will contact applicant, review, and assess the feasibility of the requested Pet Visitation prior to allowing access and obtain the attending physician's order prior to allowing access.
- C. Infection Prevention and Control or their designee (e.g., LHC Nursing House Supervisor) will review this policy with patient and pet handler and instruct the pet handler regarding the following:
 - a. The animal is not to be left alone at any time during the visit.
 - b. The animal is not allowed any area that processes food or clean linen.
 - c. The animal is not allowed to be close to any open or dressed wounds.
 - d. A barrier such as a disposable cloth or towel must be placed between the animal's coat and the patient's linen. The barrier is removed and discarded at the end of the visit.
- D. LHC staff are advised to minimize contact with animal saliva, dander, urine, and feces.

- E. Patient, animal handler, and LHC staff will observe standard infection prevention precautions after any animal contact/interaction unless otherwise directed by the Infection Prevention and Control staff.
- F. **NOTE:** This policy does **not** apply to outside grounds owned, controlled, or operated by Livingston HealthCare which are pet friendly.
- G. **Exemption:** Law Enforcement K9 units responding to emergencies at Livingston Health Care facilities

References

1. Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC)
2. https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
3. Livingston Health Care Policy# Service Animals at Livingston HealthCare

Attachments:

1. Pet Visitation Application and Guidelines

Key Words: Pet, Service Animal, Therapy Animal, Animal Companion

Approved by Livingston HealthCare Senior Leadership Team on January 27, 2021

ATTACHEMENT 1



Pet Visitation Application Guidelines

1. I have read and understand the Livingston HealthCare Pet Visitation at Livingston HealthCare Policy.
2. I have attached a copy of recent vaccinations with name of administering veterinarian.
3. I understand that the pet must be bathed and groomed prior to visit.
4. I understand the pet is not allowed to interact with any other patient, visitor, or staff.
5. I understand that I must be in control of the pet at all times while visiting and that I assume sole responsible for the pet's behavior during its visitation at LHC.
6. Pets are not allowed on furniture.
7. I understand that Pet visitation is limited to 30 minutes daily unless otherwise permitted by the Infection Preventionist and/or attending LHC Physician
8. I understand we are only to visit permitted locations listed below.
9. Patients and staff are required to wash hands with soap and water after contact with any pet.
10. I agree, and concede, that Livingston HealthCare staff reserves the to terminate the pet visitation at any time.
11. By signing this application, as a condition of approval of Pet Visitation Privileges, I agree to comply with all procedures, precautions, and guidelines outlined by LHC's Policy on Pet Visitation and related policy sets.

Effective dates: _____ to _____

Authorized location of pet visitation: _____

Pet Description and Name: _____

Pet Handler Name (printed): _____

Pet Handler Signature: _____ date _____

Patient Name: _____ DOB: _____ Room # _____

Infection Prevention and Control: _____ date _____

Attending Physician Signature: _____ date _____

- Provide 1 completed copy to pet owner/handler, and another copy to the LHC HIM Department for inclusion in the medical record.