



Gillette Children's
Specialty Healthcare

Therapy Dog Team Handbook



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WELCOME to the Gillette Therapy Dog Program!

Hospitalization can be a stressful time for a child and their family. Therapy dog visits offer an enjoyable social activity that is beneficial for the patient and all members of the family. Therapy dog visits:

- Provide a diversion from the normal hospital routine
- Promote a sense of play and humor
- Stimulate physical activity and social interaction
- Reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness during hospitalization

Specific safety measures have been implemented into the Gillette Therapy Dog Program. These measures will maximize positive outcomes for the patient, their families and the therapy dog teams.

May 2016



Therapy Dog Handler/Owner Information

Therapy Dog Certification Requirements

Your therapy dog is currently certified through Pet Partners, Therapy Dogs International or Alliance of Therapy Dogs. Continued certification is required for visiting at Gillette. If your certification lapses, you must wait to visit until it is reinstated.

Due to the often challenging environment in our hospital, **Gillette requires that therapy dog teams be re-evaluated and re-certified by their certifying organization every two years.** The re-evaluation fee is paid for by the volunteer. Gillette will notify you when your two year evaluation is due. Submit documentation to the Volunteer Coordinator when you and your dog have passed the re-evaluation. Failure to complete the re-evaluation within a reasonable time period will result in suspension of volunteer status and visits to the hospital.

Trial Period

When you begin volunteering at Gillette with your dog, you and your dog will complete a three (3) month trial period before full acceptance into the Gillette therapy dog program.

Both Gillette staff and the therapy dog handler have the option to terminate the therapy dog team visits at any time. If you decide to do so, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator or Child Life staff of your decision.

Handler Age & Certification Requirements

All handlers must be 18 years of age or older. Only one handler may accompany the dog on the visit even if more than one handler is certified with the dog.

Assignment/Schedule

At the Hospital

You and your therapy dog are assigned a specific day and time to volunteer. You are expected to be here on your scheduled day and time. If you are unable to volunteer, please notify Child Life (651-229-3936) or the Volunteer Coordinator (651-578-5004) as early as possible. Please do not come at another time without first contacting staff as there may already be a therapy dog team visiting at that time.

At a Clinic

You and your therapy dog are assigned a specific day and time to volunteer at the Burnsville or Minnetonka clinics. Prior to volunteering you will be given the name and phone number of the contact person at the clinic. Please report any absences, concerns or questions to them.

Required Vaccinations and Medical Needs

Handler

A TST (Mantoux Test) is required when you start volunteering at Gillette.

An annual flu shot is required to volunteer in the hospital and clinics during flu season. The CDC will determine when flu season starts and ends (usually October-March). Submit documentation of your flu shot to the volunteer office. If you do not get the flu shot you must wear a medical mask while volunteering. Masks are available in the volunteer office.

Therapy Dog

Each dog is required to meet their certifying organization's health and vaccination requirements including, but not limited to:

- Verification of current inoculations for: Rabies (1 or 3 years), DHPP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Par influenza),
- Results of annual heartworm test
- Verification of negative stool exam for parasites

Dogs are to be deemed by a veterinarian to be in good physical and mental health and free of contagious disease.

Documentation will be submitted to the volunteer office when vaccinations are updated.

If your dog requires medication or medical treatment, please submit documentation from your veterinarian that your dog is cleared for visiting the hospital.

Volunteer Dress Code

Both you and your dog will wear Gillette ID badges while volunteering. The Gillette dress code requires business-casual attire. Please dress appropriately when visiting with your dog:

Acceptable clothing includes:

- casual or dress pants.
- t-shirts with no writing or logos
- Gillette logo wear (logos for other organizations are not allowed)
- nice shirts or blouses
- sweaters
- closed-toe shoes are required — neat, clean athletic shoes are great
- socks must be worn at all times

For appearance and safety reasons, we do not allow:

- jeans of any color or scrubs
- hoodies or other casual sweatshirts
- t-shirts with logos or messages

- tight/clinging tops and pants
- shorts or short skirts
- flip-flops/sandals

For safety reasons, please tie back shoulder-length or longer hair and do not wear dangling earrings or necklaces.

Patient Information and Confidentiality

Patients and family members often share their story or concerns with volunteers.

Please offer a listening ear to them but remember that:

- What you see or hear at the hospital, stays at the hospital! Please **do not** share protected and private patient information. Sharing this information will result in the loss of your volunteer position.
- Protected information can be in a written, verbal or electronic format and includes patient name, diagnosis, treatment, billing information, medical notes, medical records, etc. This information cannot be shared without permission from the patient and/or parent.
- Do not ask questions such as why they are a patient, what surgery they had or when are they going home.

Infection Control

The following infection and safety measures are for the patient's, your dogs, and your own protection. Please follow them while volunteering with your dog.

- Your dog is fed a commercially prepared or a cooked, home-made diet. Dogs cannot be on a raw protein diet due to shedding of pathogenic bacteria (an increased risk of disease to immune-compromised, very young or elderly persons).
- Your dog is clean and well groomed for visiting. This includes being bathed (wet or dry bath) 24 hours or less before your visit, being brushed, nails trimmed, ears clean and free of odor, eyes and teeth cleaned.
- Dogs do not lick or "kiss" patients at any times. They never lick an open sore, wound or incision.
- Treats can be given with a spoon or other instrument, not directly by hand. Show the patient how to use the spoon and then let them offer the treat.
- Alcohol hand foam/gel for sanitizing hands and hand lotions for skin protection are available by every patient room, at nursing stations and at the information desk.
- Please carry sanitizing gel with you while volunteering. Small bottles of gel are available in the volunteer office. Offer the gel to anyone who pets your dog and use it frequently on your own hands.
- Please wash your hands or use the hand sanitizer:
 - before and after you enter a patient's space
 - before and after patient contact

- after using the restroom
- after sneezing and coughing
- Do not come in to volunteer if you:
 - are ill
 - have a fever over 100°
 - have diarrhea
 - have cold or flu-like symptoms
 - recent exposure to chickenpox
 - have flu-like symptoms or recent exposure to the flu
- Do not visit with your dog starting from onset of and unit at least one week beyond the resolution of:
 - Episodes of vomiting or diarrhea
 - Urinary or fecal incontinence
 - Episodes of sneezing or coughing of unknown or suspected infectious origin
 - Treatment with nontopical antimicrobials or any immunosuppressive doses of medications
 - Open wounds
 - Fleas, ticks, or mange (may return when veterinarian determines animal to be clear)
 - Ear infections
 - Skin infections or “hot spots”
 - Orthopedic or other conditions that, in the opinion of your veterinarian, could result in pain or distress to the dog during handling and/or when maneuvering within the facility
 - Is in heat
 - Is recovering from surgery

Please call to let us know if you are not coming in: Volunteer Coordinator 651-578-5004.

Safety

When visiting on a nursing unit, check in first with the nurses station for any special instructions (i.e., who NOT to visit, who has specifically requested a dog visit, etc).

- Do not leave your dog alone or under the control of anyone else. You are responsible at all times for your dog’s behavior.
- Do not go into rooms with isolation signs posted outside their door.
 - Family members of patients in isolation are not allowed to touch your dog.
- Do not transfer (lift) patients in or out of bed. If a patient wants to get out of bed to see or pet your dog, ask a nurse or other staff to assist the patient.
- Do not bring food or drink to a patient without staff approval. Do not give candy or gum to patients.

Incident Procedure:

In the event of an injury (scratch, bite or any other inappropriate animal behavior) or other adverse incident:

- Immediately secure your dog so you can manage the situation
- Report scratch, bite, or other injury to nursing staff immediately so wounds can be cleaned and treated promptly
- End your visit immediately and leave the room.
- In the case of bites, intentional scratches or other serious, inappropriate behavior, the animal's visiting rights will immediately be withdrawn
- In the case of accidental scratches, the situation will be reviewed and appropriate measures will be taken to prevent similar injuries from occurring again
- If measures cannot be undertaken to reduce the risk of recurrence, visitation privileges will be withdrawn
- If it is determined that the handlers behavior was at fault in the incident, the handlers visitation privileges will be suspended until the situation has been address by staff
- Report the incident to the Volunteer Coordinator or other staff before leaving hospital
- Fill out the hospital incident report
- Complete Pet Partners, TDI or ATD required reports and provide a copy to Gillette

Other Policies

Cell Phones

Please leave your cell phone in a locker in the Volunteer Office. Cell phones may be used in lobby areas after your visit. Do not take your cell phone with you onto the nursing units.

Patient Photos

Patients may ask to have their picture taken with you and your dog. If you feel comfortable, please say yes. However, you cannot take pictures of our patients to share with your family, friends or anyone outside of the hospital. This includes photos taken with your cell phone.

If you want to take pictures that would be used for publicity purposes, please contact our Public Relations Department for the appropriate information and permission forms.

Parking During Your Visit

Parking at the Hospital

All hospital therapy dog teams park in the Region's West Ramp. Please wipe off your dog's feet before visiting patient rooms (especially in winter!). Wipes are available in the Volunteer Office.

Your ID badge will lift the ramp gate giving you access to the ramp. Please use this privilege only when volunteering with your dog. Please pay for your parking if you are at the hospital for other reasons such as visiting a friend.

Parking at Off-Site clinics

Free parking is provided at all off-site clinics. Staff will give you any required information.

Visiting With Your Therapy Dog

Hospital Therapy Dog Guidelines

Please walk your dog prior to entering the hospital to reduce the chance of toileting accidents. Outdoor space is available by the West parking ramp on Level B (street level) and along Jackson Street outside the 205 building. Please do not walk your dog immediately outside the Gillette employee door of the 205 building. If your dog has an accident, please notify housekeeping immediately for cleanup.

Where to visit in the hospital

Areas to visit in the hospital include:

- Rehab Therapies waiting room in 205 Building
- Out-patient waiting area on 4th floor
- Orthopedics/Surgical nursing unit
- Adult nursing unit on 7th floor
- Rehabilitation nursing unit
- Neurosciences nursing unit

Do not visit in:

- Imaging/Surgery Waiting Room on 3rd floor
- PICU = Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, 4th floor (visiting allowed only when requested by PICU nursing staff)
- Isolation rooms
- Rooms with “no dogs please” signs on the door
- Ronald McDonald Family Room (visiting allowed only when requested by nursing or Child Life staff)

Visiting Guidelines

When visiting a nursing unit, check in first with the nurses station for any special instructions (i.e., who NOT to visit, who has specifically requested a dog visit, etc).

When visiting patient rooms:

- Knock on door before entering room.
- Stop in doorway of room, explain you have a therapy dog with you and wait for patient or family member to invite you in.
- Obtain permission from all individuals in the room before entering.
- If the patient or family does not want a dog visit, smile and immediately move on to the next patient room. Do not try to talk them into a visit with your dog.
- Do not visit with patients while they are eating or drinking, do not permit the patient to eat or drink while interacting with the dog.
- Smile! And say “Hello”

- Use a friendly tone
- Make eye contact
- Introduce yourself
- Ask patient's name
- Listen patiently. Give the patient time to answer or respond.
- Sit or crouch down to the patient's level
- Introduce your dog
 - Breed, age, name
 - Training they've had
 - Tricks and cute quirks

When interacting with patients

- Control your dog. You are responsible at all times for your dog's behavior.
 - With other visiting dogs
 - With patients
 - No jumping on patients
 - Dog is calm and approachable
 - Dog is on leash and leash is in your hand at all time
- Watch the patient carefully. Be aware of their body cues and body language and terminate your visit when appropriate.
- Leave quickly and appropriately if patient becomes upset, frightened or unhappy.
- Use appropriate conversation, questions and humor for patient's age.
- Do not ask questions about why they are in the hospital or when they are going home.
- Respect directions from family members, patient and/or staff
- Keep the dog off the patient bed, wheelchair
 - If the patient wants the dog to get up on the bed, put a barrier on the bed before allowing the dog to do so. A towel from the bathroom works well. Put the used towel in the dirty laundry bin before leaving the patient's room.
- Help the patient interact with your dog by lifting the dog up to the patient's eye level, teaching the patient how your dog likes to be petted, etc.
- Ask permission before moving furniture to allow easier access for the dog.
 - Replace the furniture at the end of your visit.
- Watch for patient being too "rough" on your dog. Stop the activity immediately and show the patient how the dog likes to be petted, or leave the room if the activity continues.
- Keep dog away from medical equipment, tubes and bandages
- Do not sit on the patient's bed.
- Leave the patient's room immediately when medical staff enters.
- Relate any questions or concerns you may have about a patient to nursing staff.

Reminder: Please keep visits with staff to a minimum. You are here for the kids!

Burnsville, Maple Grove & Minnetonka Clinics Therapy Dog Guidelines

Clinic Staff will:

- Define the area the dog has access to (waiting room, exam rooms, etc)
- Inform you as to type of patients, ages, or any information you should know about specific patients
- Establish shift times (length of visit of 1 hour is suggested but can be longer if appropriate)
- Give you the name and phone number of the contact person at the clinic
- Submit therapy dog team hours to the volunteer office every month
- Inform the Volunteer Coordinator of any changes in the volunteer schedule, any concerns about the therapy dog team, etc.

Volunteers

- Your clinic will have a Volunteer Sign-In Sheet that you will fill in every time you volunteer. Clinic staff will then send the sign-in sheet to volunteer office to record your hours
- If your clinic does not have a sign in sheet, it is your responsibility to record your hours and to submit that information to the Volunteer Coordinator. Records can be emailed to pnkthomas@gillettechildrens.com, faxed to 651-312-3167 (please write "To Volunteer Program" on the cover sheet) or mailed to Guest Services, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, 200 University Avenue East, St. Paul, MN, 55101.
- If you do not submit your hours to the office, you will not get credit for your visits.

Check in with staff at the clinic for any special instructions about your visit.

Reminder: Please keep visits with staff to a minimum. You are here for the kids!

Pet Therapy Position Description



Volunteer Position Description

Position Title: Therapy Dog Teams

Department: Guest Services

Supervisor/Department Contact: Volunteer Coordinator, Guest Services
Manager

Schedule: Weekdays, Evenings and Weekends as scheduled

Purpose: Under the direction of the Volunteer Coordinator and Guest Services Manager, you and your certified therapy dog provide one-on-one visits with inpatient or participate in therapy dog group events. Therapy dog team visits offer a social activity that is beneficial for patient and family members by providing diversion from the normal hospital routine, promoting a sense of play and humor, stimulating physical activity and social interaction, and reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness during hospitalization.

Duties

- Assist patient and family members to interact with the therapy dog in a safe and controlled environment.
- Check in at the nursing station before entering any patient rooms. Ask for special requests for dog visits, rooms not to visit.
- Check in with the desk attendant in the Ronald McDonald Family Room before visiting in the Family Room.
- Wash hands frequently: before entering a patient room, in-between visits with each child, and when assignment is completed.
- Practice “good” safety techniques as indicated in the Volunteer Handbook.
- Check doors and wheelchair trays for “no dog visit” signs

- Turn in copies of dog's registration and vaccination records as they are updated.
- Hand out photo stickers to patients.

Limitations

- Therapy teams may visit only on the 4th floor of the hospital. No dogs will visit on the 3rd floor.
- Therapy dog volunteers are not allowed to take patients out of nursing units or off the 4th floor.
- Do not visit in the PICU unless specifically asked by nursing staff to visit. Visits will be directly monitored by nursing staff. Family members cannot request a visit without first getting staff approval. Check in at the PICU nurses station first to confirm visit approval.
- Do not enter isolation rooms with your dog. You may visit isolations rooms **ONLY** from the doorway, do not enter the room. Family members **may not pet or touch your dog.**

Qualifications:

- current certification through Pet Partners, Therapy Dogs International, or Alliance of Therapy Dogs. Teams must be in good standing with their certifying organization.
- annual certification and vaccination document must be on file in the Volunteer Office.
- friendly, outgoing
- organized, able to work independently
- looking to have fun
- comfortable interacting with a wide variety of persons

Confidentiality Policy: Patients have a right to privacy and volunteers (as well as paid staff) must respect that right. Specific information regarding a patient's nature of illness and/or condition is the responsibility of the attending physician and hospital staff. Avoid any comments in this area. Information you receive from patients and families should be kept confidential. If you feel information you have been told should be shared with staff, encourage the patient and/or family member to discuss it with a nurse, social worker or other appropriate staff. Volunteers may also share information with staff if the patient and/or family refuse to do so and volunteers feel it is important to be known.

Please have the volunteer sign this form to verify confidentiality AND that their supervisor reviewed the position tasks, limitations, etc. with them in their training.

Volunteer Signature

Supervisor Signature

Date

Date Created: 4/12/2013

Updated: 4/20/2016

Appendix E

Therapy Dog Agreement

I agree that my dog and I will follow the program guidelines set forth by Volunteer Services and Child Life/Therapeutic Recreation staff.

I have read and understand all information in the Therapy Dog Handbook.

I will provide updated copies of vet records and pet therapy certification in a timely manner. I understand that I will not be able to volunteer if these have lapsed.

I also agree to the following requirements:

- Bathing my dog within 24 hours of scheduled visit time (wet or dry bath)
- Visiting during my scheduled shift
- Notifying volunteer and/or child life/therapeutic staff if I need to miss a session
- Following HIPAA and patient confidentiality guidelines
- Not visiting if my dog is ill or in heat

By my signature I declare that I have read, understand, and agree with all parts of the Therapy Dog Agreement.

Volunteer signature

Date