



TITLE: Utilization of a Service Animal

MANUAL: ACCESSIBILITY

SECTION: N/A

APPROVED BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

POLICY

North Shore Health Network (NSHN) recognizes the requirements set out in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, (Ontario Regulation, 429/07) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, as it pertains to the rights of a disabled person to utilize a service animal while accessing care at the NSHN.

PROCEDURES

I. Identifying Service Animals

- Service animals may be any animal that assists a person with a disability. They provide a wide range of assistance including guiding a person who is blind, alerting a person who is deaf to certain sounds, opening doors and retrieving items for persons with mobility disabilities, emotional support for persons with mental illness, and many other forms of assistance.
- Service animals may be identified by any one of the following methods:
 - i. the animal may be wearing a service animal vest, harness or saddle packs
 - ii. the animal may be observed providing assistance
 - iii. the person may have a letter from a physician or nurse stating that they require the animal for reasons related to a disability
 - iv. the person may show a valid identification card or training certificate from a recognized service animal training school.

II. NSHN's Responsibilities

- Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal will be permitted to enter NSHN's premises with the animal and keep the animal with them in areas where the public are allowed, which excludes the patient care areas, as necessitated for infection control reasons. NSHN will provide notice and explanation to a person accompanied by a service animal in relation to this exclusion. Where required, NSHN will provide alternate assistance in place of the excluded service animal.

III. Responsibilities of Persons with Service Animals

- The responsibilities of the person with the disability accompanied by a service animal include:
 - i. Keeping the animal in control at all times;
 - ii. Utilizing the service animal in a manner that is not a threat to health and safety of others; and
 - iii. Keeping the service animal's immunizations up-to-date.
- If required, NSHN will provide notice in the form of a copy of this procedure to the person with disabilities to aid in the comprehension of this practice.

IV. Removal of Service Animals from NSHN's Premises

- In the event that the parameters established by NSHN for the use of service animals while accessing services at NSHN are breached, service animals may be removed for any one of the following reasons:
 - i. Disruptive or aggressive behavior, such as growling, barking or other signs of threatening or aggressive behavior;
 - ii. Causing damage, including causing damage to any person or property;

- iii. Poor health of the animal, such as a contagious illness, where the animal risks spreading the illness to others.

V. Other Possible Considerations

- In rare circumstances, a person may have a severe and debilitating reaction to an animal, such as respiratory distress. If a situation of this nature occurs, or is reasonably believed to have the possibility of occurring, NSHN will suggest alternative means of providing care services in this circumstance, taking into account the needs of all parties involved.

VI. Agents/Others Providing Goods and Services on Behalf of NSHN

- Agents and others providing goods and services on behalf of NSHN will adhere to these practices.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

I. External References

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards For Customer Service
- Manitoulin Health Centre. (January 2010). Policy & Procedure: Accessibility Standards – Utilization of Service Animal.
- Ministry of Community and Social Services. (2009, April). Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.