

Guidance for Service Dog Admission to a Psychiatric Ward

Identifying a Service Dog

Permitted:

“Is this animal required because of a disability?”

“What work or task has this animal been trained to perform?”

Prohibited:

“What is your disability?”

“Do you have proof or identification for the animal?”

Service Dog Admission Considerations

Ask and answer the following:

Is there a medical necessity in this setting?

Is there a reasonable alternative to meet disability needs given the

Nature of the facility

Nature of the unit

Current census

Mix of patients (children, pregnant women, elderly, immunocompromised individuals)

What is the health and condition of animal to include appropriate vaccinations?

What does the Hospital Infection Control Coordinator recommend to reduce risk?

What is the behavior of animal (aggression, housebroken, etc.)?

What are the potential safety risks to the patient, other patients, and staff?

What is the potential harm to animal?

Consider consulting legal and/ or risk management services for input

Considerations Post- Admission Decision

Document and communicate decision and decision making process to owner

If service animal not admitted:

Identify and document who is responsible for coordinating animal care

Provide information on local and hospital affiliated veterinarian and animal resources

If service animal is admitted with owner:

Clarify who will provide care for the animal (e.g. feeding, cleaning, walking, toileting, etc.)

Reinforce basic etiquette (e.g. no petting or playing with animal)

Reinforce basic hygiene (e.g. hand washing before and after contact with animal)

Delineate responsibility for property damage

Identify an emergency response plan for injuries to dog and patients