

# UConn HEALTH

## CLINICAL POLICY

### Animals in the Clinical Practice and Patient Care Areas

**A. EFFECTIVE DATE :**

May 15, 2020

**B. PURPOSE :**

To provide rules concerning the presence of animals in UConn Health clinical practice and patient care areas

**C. POLICY :**

1. The University welcomes the presence of service animals assisting people with disabilities on its campuses consistent with the provisions of this policy and applicable law. A service animal is generally permitted to be on University property in any place where the animal's handler is permitted to be. In certain limited situations, a service animal may be prohibited for safety and health reasons.
2. Members of the University community are prohibited from interfering in any way with a service animal or the duties it performs.
3. In certain limited situations, UConn Health allows for the presence of emotional support animals and pets in its clinical practice and patient care areas.
4. These procedures fall under the University policy – Animals on Campus.

**D. SCOPE :**

Clinical practice and patient care areas at UConn Health including John Dempsey Hospital (JDH), University Medical Group (UMG) and UConn Health Dental Practices.

**E. DEFINITIONS :**

1. **Service Animal** – Any dog specifically trained to perform a task for the benefit of an individual with a disability. In some circumstances, a miniature horse may be considered a service animal. The tasks performed by a service animal must directly relate to the individual's disability.
2. **Service Animal in Training** - A dog that is being trained as a service animal and includes a puppy that is being raised to become a service animal in training.
3. **Handler** - An individual with a disability who is the owner and user, or trainer of a service animal or ESA, or the owner or individual bringing an animal onto University property.
4. **Restricted Clinical Area** – Area where the presence of an animal could compromise patient safety. Examples include sterile environments such as the operating rooms, procedures areas, or other areas that require a protected environment.
5. **Emotional Support Animal (ESA)** - Any animal specifically designated by a qualified medical provider that alleviates one or more identified symptoms of an individual's disability. Such animal may afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, workplace, or other area, provided there is a nexus between the individual's disability and the assistance the animal provides. ESAs are also commonly known as companion, therapeutic or assistance animals. ESAs are not service animals.

6. **Pet** - Any animal that is not a service animal or ESA.

**F. MATERIAL(S) NEEDED :**

None

**G. PROCEDURE :**

**1. Service Animals**

Patients and visitors are allowed to bring service animals to all non-restricted areas without advance approval or authorization. In some cases, service animals may be allowed to accompany patients to restricted areas, with prior authorization from the appropriate medical staff (i.e. Nursing Manager in consultation with the Department of Epidemiology Infection Prevention Specialist).

When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. UConn Health staff may ask only the following two questions:

1. Is the dog (or miniature horse) a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

If the patient or support person cannot identify work or a task that the animal has been trained to perform, then staff should raise the concern as to the appropriateness of the animal to the unit manager who can contact the Administrator on Call for assistance. The Office of General Counsel can also be contacted for additional guidance.

Allergies and fear of dogs (or other service animals) are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals.

**2. Service Animals in Training**

Service animals in training are allowed only in non-restricted areas open to members of the public. They are never allowed in restricted areas or areas not open to members of the public.

**3. Emotional Support Animals**

Emotional support animals are allowed to accompany patients in non-restricted areas only with advance approval of the appropriate medical staff (i.e. Nursing Manager). Emotional support animals are generally not allowed in restricted areas unless given prior authorization from the appropriate medical staff (i.e. Nursing Manager in consultation with the Department of Epidemiology Infection Prevention Specialist).

**4. Inpatient Visits by Animals (Pets) at JDH**

In determining whether an animal may be allowed to visit an inpatient at John Dempsey Hospital, the Nursing Manager shall:

- a. Determine the appropriateness of a request for a pet visitation.
- b. Contact the Department of Epidemiology Infection Prevention Specialist for prior approval.
- c. Determine if the following criteria for a pet visit have been met:
  - i. Patient is in a single room.
  - ii. Proof (tag/certificate) of current immunization (rabies required)
  - iii. Pet must be leashed and under visitor control while in patients room;
  - iv. Visitor must be able to stay with the pet at all times, maintain control, and be responsible for the elimination and/or clean-up of accidents while on Hospital premises.

- v. Meet the animal in the front lobby and escort them directly to the patient. (This may also be done by a designee).

**5. Handler’s Responsibilities**

- a. Handlers (or their designee) must have full control of the animal at all times. A service animal, service animal in training, ESA or pet must be supervised directly by the handler (or their designee), and the handler must retain full control of the animal at all times while on University property. The animal must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a harness, leash or tether, unless these devices interfere with the animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. In those cases, the handler (or their designee) must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- b. The University reserves the right to remove animals under certain circumstances including if the animal is disruptive, poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others (including but not limited to hospital staff, other patients and/or visitors), or the presence of the animal compromises a sterile environment.
- c. UConn Health staff are not responsible for providing food/water or care (including but not limited to walking) for the animal and are not responsible to provide a special location for the animal to relieve itself. If a Handler (or their designee) cannot provide care for an animal, the handler must make arrangements for such care.

**H. ATTACHMENTS :**

[Full University Policy - Animals on Campus](#)  
[Animals on Campus FAQ](#)  
[Office of Institutional Equity](#) Contact (860) 679-3563 or email [equity@uconn.edu](mailto:equity@uconn.edu)

**I. REFERENCES :**

- 1. Americans with Disabilities Act 42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.
- 2. Connecticut State Law C.G.S. § 46a-44

**J. SEARCH WORDS :**

Animal, service animal, service animal in training, therapy animal, emotional support animal, pets, pet visitation, Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, disabilities, disability

**K. ENFORCEMENT:**

Violations of this policy or associated procedures may result in appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with University By-Laws, General Rules of Conduct for All University Employees, applicable collective bargaining agreements, the University of Connecticut Student Code, other applicable University Policies, or as outlined in any procedures document related to this policy.

**L. STAKEHOLDER APPROVALS :**

- 1. Elizabeth Conklin (Signed) 3/02/2020  
Elizabeth Conklin  
Associate VP, Institutional Equity  
Date
- 2. Anne Horbatuck (Signed) 3/06/2020  
Anne Horbatuck RN, BSN, MBA  
Vice President Ambulatory Services  
Date
- 3. Scott Allen, MD (Signed) 4/26/2020

Scott Allen, MD  
Medical Director, Clinical Effectiveness and Patient Safety,  
Chief Quality Officer and Chief Medical Officer

Date

4. Steven Lepowsky, D.D.D (Signed) 5/15/2020  
Steven Lepowsky, D.D.S. Date  
Interim Dean, School of Dental Medicine
5. Caryl Ryan (Signed) 4/27/2020  
Caryl Ryan, MSN, RN Date  
Vice President, Quality and Patient Services  
and Chief Nursing Officer

**M. COMMITTEE APPROVALS :**

None

**N. FINAL APPROVAL :**

1. Andrew Agwunobi, MD (Signed) 5/01/2020  
Andrew Agwunobi, MD, MBA Date  
**UConn Health Chief Executive Officer**
2. Anne D. Horbtauck (Signed) 4/26/2020  
Anne D. Horbatuck, RN, BSN, MBA Date  
**Clinical Policy Committee Co-Chair**
3. Scott Allen, MD (Signed) 4/26/2020  
Scott Allen, MD Date  
**Clinical Policy Committee Co-Chair**
4. Caryl Ryan, MS, RN (Signed) 4/27/2020  
Caryl Ryan, MS, RN Date  
**VP Quality and Patient Service & Chief Nursing Officer**

**O. REVISION HISTORY :**

New Policy: 3/27/17 (Replaced Policies JDH 11-023 and UMG/JDH Ambulatory Services Re: Service Animals in the Practice Locations)

Revised: 5/15/2020