

Policy

	TITLE UTHA-DMS Policy on Service Animals	IDENTIFICATION NUMBER [Number]
ORGANIZATION(S) X UTHA Clinic X ASC <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Center	LEVEL <input type="checkbox"/> System X Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Department	CATEGORY <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical <input type="checkbox"/> Management X Regulatory
REVIEW CYCLE <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year X 3 years LAST REVIEW DATE: 01/22/2024	REPLACES TITLE: N/A EFFECTIVE DATE(S): N/A	
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POLICY STATEMENT

UT Health Austin (UTHA) and Dell Medical School (DMS) will reasonably accommodate patients and visitors with their service animals. This policy is intended to comply generally with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

PURPOSE

UTHA-DMS is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all patients, staff, and visitors, including those who use service animals.

SCOPE

All UTHA-DMS staff.

DEFINITIONS

Service animal - an animal (generally a dog) that has been specially trained or equipped to perform specific tasks directly related to the handler's disability.

Emotional Support Animals - Animals whose sole function is for emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companionship and are not considered service animals.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals who bring a service or emotional support animal onto our premises are expected to:

- Keep the animal harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with an animal's work or an owner's disability prevents them from using these devices.
- Control the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls, if the animal cannot be harnessed, leashed, or tethered.

It is the patient/handler's responsibility to supervise, control, and care for the service animal, including the removal of the animal from the premises. UTHA/DMS will coordinate alternative care for the animal at the handler's expense if the handler cannot perform such responsibilities.

PROCEDURES

Under the applicable laws, staff will not ask the following:

- the qualifications of the service animal or the nature of the person's disability.
- require or request medical documentation, special identification card, or training documentation for the service animal.
- request that the service animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

However, in situations where the handler's disability is not readily apparent, staff may ask the following questions for clarification:

- Is the animal required because of a disability?

- What work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform?

Service Animals:

- will be permitted to accompany its handler and enter the UTHA-DMS premises open to the public.
- may be permitted to accompany its handler and enter the areas not open to the public. Gaining admittance to such areas will be determined on a case-by-case review by the Executive Director of UTHA.
- will not be permitted to accompany its handler and enter sterile areas, or clean rooms, where special precautions (such as wearing gloves, masks, and/or gowns) are required for infection control. These areas include but are not limited to operating rooms, procedure rooms, recovery rooms, and other sterile areas.

A service animal may be denied admittance to or removed from the UTHA-DMS premises if the service animal:

- Is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it.
- Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- Is not housebroken.
- Exhibits aggressive behavior including, but not limited to, biting, excessive whining, barking, growling, scratching, or teeth-baring.
- Is excessively noisy.
- Is not well-groomed or does not appear healthy, in which case our staff will ask for proof of vaccination or the dog’s health records before entering the premises.

Emotional Support Animals

An emotional support animal (also known as a comfort animal) provides reassurance just by being with a person. Dogs, cats, birds, hamsters, and many other species can be emotional support animals. However, they do not qualify as “service animals” under the ADA. Therefore, our organization has chosen NOT to allow emotional support animals on its premises. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

If a service animal must be removed from the premises, absent other circumstances, the owner may re-enter the premises without the service animal.

For questions about bringing service animals onto the UTHA/DMS premises, contact the Executive Director of UT Health Austin and/or the Compliance Office.

REFERENCES

1. https://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm
2. https://gov.texas.gov/organization/disabilities/assistance_animals#responsibilities

ATTACHMENTS

N/A.

APPROVAL

<p>NAME AND CREDENTIALS Carol L. Alter, MD</p> <p>TITLE Chair of the Clinical Quality Committee Executive Associate Chair Interim Director Pediatric Psychiatry Professor of Psychiatry Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences</p>	<p>NAME AND CREDENTIALS [Name and Credentials]</p> <p>TITLE [Title]</p>
<p>SIGNATURE</p>	<p>DATE [MM/DD/YYYY]</p>