

New Screening for Animals Entering Perley Health

July 29, 2022 – Ottawa, ON

Effective Monday, August 1, 2022, Perley Health long-term care will introduce enhanced screening and safety protocols for all certified therapy pets, registered service animals and personal pets (the only animals permitted to enter long-term care). These changes emerge from Ontario's Fixing Long Term Care Act, 2021, and aligns with the legislation's updated infection and prevention and control practices and guidance for all animals entering long-term care.

Perley Health shall ensure that any pets or animals visiting the home have up-to-date immunizations. This advance notice is intended to provide pet owners with sufficient time to ensure the animal's vaccination is up to date and that proof of vaccination is in hand when arriving at Perley Health on August 1.

- **The transmission of rabies is a risk to our community. On the official record of vaccination, staff will check to confirm that the animal's due date for vaccination against rabies has not expired.**

Staff must also ask screening questions each time an animal enters Perley Health. These questions include:

1. Does the pet have any known or suspected infectious illness, wound or skin infection?
2. Has the pet vomited or had diarrhea in the last week?

If the owner/handler answers "no" to the screening questions, the animal **will be permitted entry** to the long-term care buildings at Perley Health.

Animals enrolled in the volunteer program are monitored by that program and not subject to screening at the Main Entrance.

While visiting, animals must remain on a leash (no longer than one metre) or inside a cage. Public common areas where food is prepared, served and sold are not accessible to animals (the only exception is service animals). Other restricted areas include the cafeteria, dining rooms, pub/ice cream parlour, Deborah's Gift Boutique and diagnostic areas along with areas where additional infection-control precautions must be maintained.

It is the responsibility of the pet owners/handlers to clean up all messes created by the pet when inside the home and on Perley Health property. Outdoor visits are recommended for animals that do not qualify for entry or fail screening.

- To read the full Perley Health policy, please visit <https://www.perleyhealth.ca/visits>

These protocols do not apply to animals visiting the Perley Health Senior Living apartments.

“We appreciate all the emotional and physical support that an animal can provide to a resident and we don’t want to limit access to the comforting and therapeutic relationships that are the source of happiness for many members of our community,” says Mary Boutette, Chief Operating Officer.

“We must comply with the new Ontario legislation and we commit to making every effort to ensure this process is easy and as accessible as possible. We thank you for patience and support as we work to implement this policy.”

This message was shared today on the Perley Health website, emailed to subscribers, posted to social media and available as a handout at the Main Entrance.

Contact:
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	POLICY & PROCEDURE
CATEGORY: ADMINISTRATIVE-OPERATIONAL	ISSUE DATE: July 21, 2022
AUTHORIZED BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	REVISION DATE: N/A
SUBJECT: Animals and Pets	

PURPOSE

- The purpose of this policy and procedure is to
- provide guidance on the admittance of animals into the home
 - comply with legislative requirements
 - comply with infection prevention and control practices

POLICY

The only animals permitted to enter the home are certified therapy pets, registered service animals and personal pets.

Staff are not permitted to bring their personal pets to work while they are working.

Prior to entering the home, the owner of the animal/pet is required to provide proof (e.g. health certificate or signed letter from a veterinarian) to the Perley Health staff that the pet is up-to-date on their rabies vaccination.

Pets must be free of any known or suspected infectious illness, wound or skin infection.

While visiting, the pet must remain on a leash (no longer than one meter) or inside of a cage. Pet owners/handlers are responsible for cleaning up after their pet messes inside the home and anywhere on Perley Health property.

If the pet has vomited or had diarrhea in the last week, it is not permitted in the home.

Animals are not permitted in public common areas where food is prepared, served and sold, (i.e. cafeteria, dining rooms, pub/ice cream parlour and gift boutique), diagnostic areas and areas where additional infection-control precautions must be maintained. A service animal is the exception to this rule.

Exotic, zoo and farm animals can visit outside of the home.

Pets and animals are not permitted to reside in Perley Health long-term care.

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APPLICABILITY/SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all pets entering the long-term care buildings of Perley Health.

DEFINITIONS

Service Animal: a service animal has been specifically trained to work for or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. A service animal is not a pet.

Certified Therapy Pet: provides invaluable care and support through animal-assisted therapy and other animal-assisted activities.

Personal Pet: these pets are owned by an Essential Visitor and/or General Visitor of the resident.

Essential Visitor: a caregiver, a support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents, a person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care, or a government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.

General Visitor: a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.

PROCEDURES

Authorized Animals

The only animals permitted to enter the home are certified therapy pets, registered service animals and personal pets.

Prior to entering the home, the owner of the animal/pet is required to provide proof (e.g. health certificate or signed letter from a veterinarian) to the Commissionaire that the pet is up-to-date on their rabies' vaccination.

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Unauthorized Animals

If you see an animal that does not appear to be a certified therapy pet, service animal or personal pet, please inform your manager or supervisor.

Harm from Animals

In the event an employee is scratched, bitten or becomes ill as a result of a pet, an employee incident report in compliance with the employee incident reporting procedures must be completed. In the event a resident is scratched, bitten or becomes ill as a result of a pet, a risk management report must be completed in the resident’s health record. The manager/supervisor/delegate in the area in which the incident took place must report the incident to Ottawa Public Health (OPH) as soon as possible. OPH will complete a risk assessment and determine next steps.

Harm to Animals

In the event that a pet becomes ill or injured, the owner is responsible for immediately isolating the pet from the resident(s) ensuring the pet receives the required care.

Personal Pets Visiting a Resident

During their visit, the pet’s purpose is to visit the designated resident only. The pet must not interact with anyone in the facility (including staff members) except for the resident it intends to visit. The resident is encouraged to wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after the visit. The pet owner is responsible for “poop and scoop” functions.

Pet Therapy

All Pet Therapy teams must be registered volunteers of Perley Health and wear their identification at all times. The pet must be supervised at all times by the owner who is a therapy trained registered volunteer. All Pet Therapy teams must follow policies/guidelines of the outside organization they are representing. All pet therapy animal handlers must ensure that anyone, including residents, performs hand hygiene with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching the animal. The product is available throughout Perley Health.

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Service Animals

The owner shall ensure the service animal is clearly identified/recognizable as a service animal (e.g. harness or jacket with markings of the training school, identification card).

The service animal must remain in the owner’s care and control at all times

Staff members shall not:

- touch, pet, speak to, distract, deliberately startle, feed, or provide care for the service animal
- ask about the nature of the owner’s disability

REFERENCES

Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 567, Rabies Immunization
Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 557, Communicable Diseases - General
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

APPENDICES

N/A