




<b>POLICY NAME:</b>	<b>Persons with Service Animals – Customer Service Standards</b>
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POLICY NUMBER:	ADMIN-HS-1.4	DEVELOPED / ISSUED BY: (Author / Owner of Policy)	David Smith, Program Director
DEPARTMENT:	Administration	APPROVED BY: (Name & Title)	David Smith for Cynthia St. John, Chief Executive Officer
ISSUE DATE:	July 15, 2019	SIGNATURE OF APPROVER:	
REVISION DATE:	April 14, 2022	REVIEW FREQUENCY:	Biennial

**PURPOSE:**

Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) is committed to serving people with disabilities who use service animals.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, agents, and others providing services on behalf of SWPH.

**POLICY:**

SWPH will provide guidelines regarding the use of service animals by people with disabilities when accessing SWPH's programs and services. Examples of service animals include, but are not limited to:

- A guide dog;
- Hearing alert animals;
- Animals trained to alert persons to oncoming seizures; and
- Animals trained to assist people with autism, mental health disabilities, physical disabilities, and other disabilities.

Service animals are working animals. They are not considered pets. For this reason, they are not to be treated like a pet. When a person with a service animal is attempting to access SWPH programs and services, employees should not:

- Touch the service animal;
- Make eye contact with the service animal;

- Talk to the service animal;
- Attempt to feed the service animal; or
- Give the service animal any form of attention.

The person with the service animal is responsible for always maintaining the care and control of the animal while accessing SWPH's programs and services. This includes keeping control of the animal while present on the property.

Service animals may enter those areas of SWPH property that are open to the public or other third parties unless the animal's presence in those areas is prohibited by law.

Service animals may not enter any areas of SWPH property where the presence of an animal is prohibited by law. For example, service animals may enter an area where food is served but may not enter an area where food is prepared.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **1. Identifying Service Animals**

- a. Service animals are typically recognized by a harness or a sign, or a coat.
- b. If it is not readily apparent that the person uses the animal for reasons related to his/her disability, SWPH employees may request that the person with the disability provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. However, this is unlikely to occur and would be a last resort.

### **2. Alternate Service Options Where Animals are Prohibited by Law:**

- a. If a person with a service animal enters an area where the presence of an animal is prohibited by law, the employee of SWPH will:
  - Inform the person with the service animal why the animal is not permitted in the area.
  - Offer to provide the goods and services to the person in a suitable alternate location where the service animal's presence is permitted.
- b. If a suitable alternate location is not available and if the person is willing to be separated from the service animal, the employee of SWPH will offer a safe location where the animal can wait and help the person while separated from the service animal. For example, a person with vision loss might need someone to guide them.

### **3. Discomfort and Service Animals:**

- a. SWPH must provide the greatest amount of accommodation for the person with the service animal; however, this should not be at the expense of another person. When a person announces his/her discomfort with a service animal (e.g. fear, allergies), the employee should discuss the situation with the affected person(s) and make every effort to meet the needs of all parties.

- b. If an employee of SWPH is allergic to a service animal, the representative will:
  - Seek an alternate qualified SWPH employee to provide the goods or services to the person with the service animal, or
  - Seek a reasonable alternate location to provide the goods or services to the person with the service animal
- c. If an alternate qualified SWPH employee is not reasonably available and is willing to be separated from the animal, offer a safe location where the animal can wait and offer assistance to the person while separated from the service animal. For example, a person with vision loss might need someone to guide /them.
- d. If a member of the public or a third party is uncomfortable with a service animal, the SWPH employee will:
  - seek an alternate location to provide the goods or services to the person with the service animal, or
  - invite the other person to wait in a different location until the person with the service animal has vacated the area of service. If being relocated to an alternate location would provide enhanced accommodation for the person with the service animal, the SWPH employee will invite the person with the service animal to relocate.
- e. If a person must remove themselves from a waiting area due to an allergic reaction, the SWPH employee will make reasonable efforts to ensure that he/she do not lose their place in the sequence.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

Disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

The foregoing definition includes disabilities of differing severity, whether visible or non-visible and whether temporary or permanent.

Service Animal means any animal that is specifically trained to assist a person with a

disability, where it is either readily apparent that the person uses the animal for reasons relating to his/her disability (e.g. a hearing dog wearing a harness) or the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**COMPLIANCE:**

*Failure to comply with this policy and any associated procedures may result in appropriate disciplinary measures.*

**RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

Customer Service Policy

**REVIEWED BY/CONSULTED WITH:**

Vanda Ostojic-Middel – May 22, 2019