

SERVICE DOG TIP SHEET



We want to ensure all our patients and visitors – including those accompanied by service dogs – have the best possible care experience. Service dogs are important partners to their disabled patients, helping them with orientation, mobility and essential tasks. Follow these best etiquette practices, we have compiled together with the **State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind** and **Canine Companions for Independence**.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND DO

Service dogs don't require proof of certification or medical documentation to enter public patient care areas of the hospital or care center. If it is not apparent that the animal is a service dog, you can only ask the following two questions:

1. Is the dog required because of a disability?
2. What work or tasks has the dog been trained to perform?

No other questions about a person's disability or the dog are permitted.

REMEMBER

- Always ask permission to approach the service dog. Service dogs are working – do not engage directly with a service dog without permission.
- Always address the person directly – don't 'talk over his or her head' to the dog or a human companion.
- Do not draw unnecessary attention to a person with a service dog. Interact with the person as you would with any other person or visitor.
- Ask how best to accommodate the service dog during the medical appointment or hospital stay. If necessary, ask who is designated to care for the dog during a medical procedure or hospital stay.

IN AN EMERGENCY

In an emergency, someone else might need to look after the service dog. Take the following steps:

- If the patient is able to communicate, ask them who they want to care for their dog and how best to accommodate the patient and service dog.
- If the patient is unable to communicate, find out if the dog came from a school or training program. Look for identifying information on the dog's harness or collar. Contact the school or training program. If this is not an option, contact family members or friends. Contact animal control after these options are exhausted.

