

Service Animals

Sharp Memorial Hospital



Sharp HealthCare recognizes the invaluable contribution of service animals to their owners' well-being. We hope the following information helps patients with service animals transition from their homes to the hospital.

What is a service animal?

A service animal is an animal that has been trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), animals that provide emotional support and comfort are not considered service animals.

What questions might I be asked by hospital staff about my service animal?

According to the ADA, two questions can be asked: (1) Is the animal required because of a disability? (2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Who is responsible for taking care of my service animal while I'm in the hospital?

You — or a designated “handler” — are responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal, including cleaning up after the animal. If you are unable to care for the animal, please ask a family member or friend to serve as the handler. Our staff cannot care for the service animal.

You may want to consider asking a loved one to take the animal home or arrange for boarding. If none of these options are available, please speak to someone on your care team.

Owner or Handler Responsibilities

- The owner or handler is responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal at all times.
- The service animal must be in control at all times. You — or a designated "handler" — should prevent your service animal from engaging in any behaviors that would interfere with the care of any patients, including you.
- The animal must be housebroken.
- The animal should be vaccinated in accordance with state and local laws.

For more information or questions, please call 858-939-3388.