



**American  
Red Cross**

Service to the Armed Forces

# **ANIMAL VISITATION PROGRAM**

Thea Wasche



# Introduction and Purpose



- Integral part of military medical facilities and VA facilities
- Also important part through SAF outreach programs
- Provides measurable effects on health as well as mental and physical wellbeing while hospitalized
- Can lower blood pressure, ease stress and reduce isolation and loneliness
- Animals accept people for who they are; no attention to age, mental or physical ability

***Programs provide an opportunity for people to get a “fur fix” and allow them to open up and be comfortable in their new surroundings***

# Programs and Activities

- **Animal Visitation Prog (AVP)**

Providing visits to MTF, installations and VA

- **Animal Asst. Activities (AAA)**

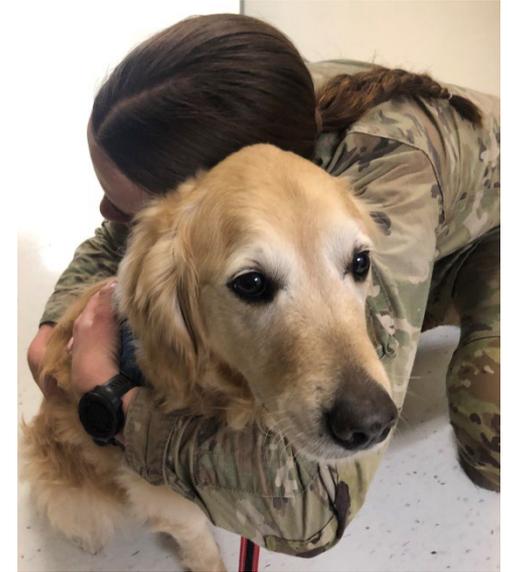
Opportunities for motivation, education, or recreation to enhance lives; such as meet and Greet, visits on scheduled or spontaneous basis...

Not tailored to specific person, condition or situation

- **Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)**

Use of therapy animals to serve as “co-therapists” to aid in treatment and recovery

Used upon direction of a provider for goal directed therapies; documented by providers



# Volunteer – Animal Owner/Handler



- Volunteers must be at least 18 yo  
Can be younger 14-17 if permitted by facility; accompanied by parent on visits; Parent certified with same animal
- Animal at least 1 year; in excellent health
- Possession of owner for 1 year
- Complete AVP screening
- Become a Red Cross Volunteer
- MTF Volunteer; background check, immunizations, medical testing, HIPPA

***SAF Animal Teams do not deploy to support Disaster Operations***

# Enhancing the Red Cross Mission

- Define need and implement doctrine
- Expand shelter model
- Identify species supported
- Create new roles
- Develop facility and material resources
- Partner with government agencies and NGOs

[Doctrine Bulletin:  
Household Pets at Shelters](#)



# The Red Cross Mission

When displaced by disaster, community members with pets should feel the Red Cross is there for them as well

- Rising number of natural disasters
- Surge in pet ownership
- Belief that pets are family
- Always growing our support to communities
- Deepen our commitment

# Expanding Our Shelter Model

Congregate  
Human  
Shelter

Only service  
animals  
permitted

Co-located  
Shelter

Pets are in a  
separate space  
but in close  
proximity to  
owner

Cohabitated  
Shelter\*

Pets are  
located with  
their owners

\*DRO Director must recommend cohabitated sheltering and National Assistant Director of Operations must approve the activation



# What is a Household Pet?

Household  
Pet  
or  
Companion  
Animal



Includes animals typically housed inside homes, such as cats, dogs, “pocket pets”/small mammals (e.g., hamsters, guinea pigs); caged birds; fish; small amphibians and reptiles

Large  
Animals and  
Livestock



Horses, cows, goats, pigs, alpacas, llamas, and other farm animals



# Pet Care in Shelters



- Owners retain responsibility for daily care of their pets to include feeding, exercise, administering medications, relief clean up, etc.
- Red Cross Pet Liaison coordinates and convenes resources
- AHJ supports with subject matter expertise and supplies; activation of veterinary team
- NGO pet partners with MOU are also engaged to assist



# DRO Resources

- Pet Liaison works with Gov Ops to requests AHJ, Veterinarian teams, and material resources through EOC
- AHJ coordinates material resources (food, crates, bowls, leashes, etc.)
- Fulfillment Team and Pet Liaison can source supplies that are needed in a pinch
- If AHJ has exhausted supplies, place orders through Logistics

