

# HAND IN PAW

## GUIDELINES AND VISITING PROTOCOL

### COVID-19

#### THERAPY TEAMS

#### WELCOME

Hand in Paw places great priority on the health and wellbeing of our volunteer teams, clients, and program partners and are committed to the highest standards in the Animal Assisted Therapy field. Hand in Paw staff has adapted in person visits and activities to comply with regulations from UAB Infection Control, Center for Disease Control, and Intermountain Therapy Animals.

#### IN PERSON ACTIVITIES AND VISITS

**Wear** a mask over your nose and mouth

**Stay** at least 6 feet away from people

**Avoid** crowded areas and poorly ventilated spaces

**Wash** your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

#### TO PREPARE FOR VISITING:

- Bathe your partner appropriately 24 hours prior to your visit.
- Do not wipe or bathe your therapy animal with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products.
- Hand washing is the #1 rule! Wash your hand thoroughly before beginning a visit.
- Use your **BioThane®** leash (5' in length) to provide additional physical distance and flexibility to visit. **BioThane®** is a trademarked artificial material with a PVC coating that is durable, waterproof, and easy to disinfect.

#### DURING YOUR VISIT:

- Wear a clean, fresh mask for each visit.
- It is ideal to wash your hands between each interaction or use hand-sanitizer for yourself and each client before and after each interaction.
- Do not touch your face, mouth, nose, or eyes while visiting.
- Do not visit with clients that are in quarantine. Politely decline if you are asked to do so.
- People with [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should not touch, be close to, or interact with therapy animals.
- Do not use items that multiple people handle, particularly if items are brought to multiple facilities between therapy visits (for example, leashes, harnesses, toys, or blankets). If items like leashes must be brought between facilities, [disinfect](#) them after each use or facility.
- Do not let other people handle items that go into the animal's mouth, such as toys and treats.
- [Disinfect](#) items such as toys, collars, leashes, harnesses, therapy vests and scarves, after each visit.
- Do not allow therapy animals to lick or give "kisses."
- **Keep paws on the ground- no shakes or high fives.**

## AFTER YOUR VISIT:

- Wash your hands!
- Disinfect your animal's collar, scarf, and leash that were used during the visit.
- HIP is providing easily cleaned Biothane leashes that can be disinfected between visits.
- Wash your uniform thoroughly between each visit.

## PRE-VISIT HEALTH ASSESSMENT

In the last two weeks, have you been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19?

You have been in close contact if you have

- a. been within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period
- b. provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- c. had direct physical contact (hugged or kissed) with someone who has COVID-19
- d. shared eating or drinking utensils with someone who has COVID-19
- e. been sneezed on or coughed on by someone who has COVID-19

## WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

Fever or chills  
Cough  
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing  
Fatigue  
Muscle or body aches  
Headache

New loss of taste or smell  
Sore throat  
Congestion or runny nose  
Nausea or vomiting  
Diarrhea



## MONITOR YOUR HEALTH DAILY

- **Be alert for symptoms.** Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
  - Especially important if you are [running essential errands](#), going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a [physical distance of 6 feet](#).
- **Take your temperature** if symptoms develop.
  - Do not take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.



## WEAR A MASK

- Masks should be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially around people who do not live with you.
- [Wash your hands](#) or use hand sanitizer before putting on your mask.
- Wear your mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Fit the mask snugly against the sides of your face, slipping the loops over your ears or tying the strings behind your head.
- If you have to continually adjust your mask, it does not fit properly, and you might need to find a different mask type or brand.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.



## STAY 6 FEET AWAY FROM OTHERS

- **Inside your home:** Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- **Outside your home:** Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who do not live in your household.
  - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
  - [Stay at least 6 feet \(about 2 arm lengths\) from other people.](#)
  - **Keeping distance from others is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.](#)**



## GET VACCINATED

- Authorized COVID-19 vaccines can help protect you from COVID-19.
- Hand in Paw requires all Therapy Team volunteers receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you.



## AVOID CROWDS AND POORLY VENTILATED SPACES

- Being in crowds like in restaurants, bars, fitness centers, or movie theaters puts you at higher risk for COVID-19.
- Avoid indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors as much as possible.
- If indoors, bring in fresh air by opening windows and doors, if possible.



## WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN

- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- It is especially important to wash:
  - Before touching your face
  - After using the restroom
  - After leaving a public place
  - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - After handling your mask
  - After touching animals or pets
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.



## COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES

- **Always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



## CLEAN AND DISINFECT

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them.** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Then, use a household disinfectant.** Use products from EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID- 19) according to the manufacturer's labeled directions.

## VISIT COORDINATION

**All HIP in person Visits will be coordinated in advance by Volunteer Coordinator, Stacey Roudebush and Director of Volunteers and Programs, Kiersten Atkinson.**

All Program Partners will have a thorough on-site assessment determine visit barriers, challenges, and best practices for safety of our teams, clients, and facility staff.

The following visit details will be determined prior to each Visit:

- Program Partner Contact responsible for organizing visit
- Date and time of visit
- Length of visit
- Number of clients participating in visit
- Location of visit
- Parking for each visit and logistics for entering building (temperature check at sign in, etc.)

## VISIT CONSIDERATIONS

- Safety
  - Your safety is our main priority- all visits will be supervised by HIP staff to provide crowd control and assess challenges of each in person visit.
- Kind reminder to put your cell phones away or off
  - No photo policy- Remain present without distractions
- Visit length- All HIP visits are two hours maximum
- Engagement- The conversation centers around your amazing therapy animal. HIP Therapy Teams will interact with Program Partner staff, clients, and family members.
- Approach- Introduce yourself and your therapy animal teammate
- Interaction- Stress relief visits will focus conversation on therapy animal. *Sit, Stay, Read!* visits will follow same approach and your therapy animal will be audience for student reading aloud.
- Closure- HIP Therapy Team will bring visit to a close, say thank you for visiting with us today and end the visit.

## LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR YOUR ANIMAL PARTNER

When acting as a volunteer for Hand in Paw as a Therapy Team, and following Hand in Paw policies and procedures, you and your pet are insured by HIP's commercial general liability insurance for losses you cause. That means that if either member of a team causes an injury or loss at a location where the team is visiting, and that loss results in a claim for which HIP is liable, HIP's commercial general liability insurance will defend and pay expenses of the claim. As an additional benefit, HIP provides this liability insurance when you are making presentations or doing other activities to promote HIP beyond your therapy visits.

HIP's commercial general liability insurance has a \$2 million aggregate limit and a \$1 million limit per occurrence. That includes a medical expense limit of \$5,000 for any one person. These limits may change.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

HIP Therapy Teams must follow all confidentiality guidelines from previous training and the Hand in Paw Manual. (Pages 186- 187) The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) has dictated very specific regulations regarding the privacy and confidentiality rights of clients, as well as heavy fines for facilities, organizations and individuals who violate these laws.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) protects the privacy and security of health information. Under HIPAA, it is illegal for you to disclose any information related to a client you visit. Protected Health information includes:

Name and Address

Phone Number and e-mail address

Social Security Number and Medical information

## POST VISIT

**All HIP Visits will be accompanied by a Hand in Paw Staff member until further notice.**

**Track your Hours-** Log your hours in Track it Forward! Every minute counts!

### Hand in Paw Staff Contact Information:

#### **Birmingham**

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