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Animal-Assisted Interventions in Health Care Settings: A Best Practices Manual for Establishing New Programs

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Animal-Assisted Interventions in Health Care Settings

A Best Practices Manual for Establishing New Programs

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

Series editors Alan M. Beck and Marguerite E. O'Haire

Animal-Assisted Interventions in Health Care Settings

A Best Practices Manual for Establishing New Programs

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Purdue University Press / West Lafayette, Indiana

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Contents

Preface, *vii*

- 1 The Health Care Administrator's Overview of AAI, *1*
 - 2 AAI Program Structure, *15*
 - 3 Establishing Requirements: AAI Program Entry, *31*
 - 4 Establishing Requirements: AAI Implementation, *41*
 - 5 Maintaining Compliance: Renewals, Record Keeping, and Team Retention, *57*
 - 6 Program Evaluation, *73*
 - 7 Beyond Visitation: Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) and Facility Dogs, *79*
- Summary, Opportunity, and the Future, *85*
References, *87*
Additional Resources, *91*



Preface

The way we conceptualize and deliver health care is changing rapidly. From the movement away from fee-for-service toward pay-for-performance, to the increasing weight assigned to patient satisfaction, health care organizations must find new paths to not only address patients' maladies, but enhance their overall well-being. It is in this environment that we look to complementary therapies: supplementing conventional clinical care, enhancing the patient experience, and improving the work environment for staff.

One such complementary therapy is animal-assisted interventions (AAI). Inquiries into the human–animal bond reveal new benefits applicable in the health care space, and with the availability of evidence-based guidelines, health care organizations enjoy a newfound flexibility to offer this service to patients, families, and staff.

At one large, urban, academic medical center, therapy dogs frequent the halls of the inpatient and outpatient units. As one medical resident said, “There is a dog in this hospital every day. We rely on them like we do any member of frontline staff.”

Research from the field of human–animal interactions, extensive experience in health care administration, and lessons from years of program management in a comprehensive medical center inform this new model for effective, safe, and sustainable animal-assisted intervention programming. In addition to this

comprehensive manual, an online template incorporating manual recommendations is available for download (docs.lib.purdue.edu/) AAI and easy tailoring to your specific facility.

It is important to note that this is not a training manual for AAI practitioners, as such manuals already exist and are referenced in our resource section. It is the hope of the authors that this manual will provide a basis for expansion of animal-assisted interventions spanning the vast array of health care delivery organizations serving needs across the care continuum. All proceeds from the sale of this manual will be donated to the Center for Human–Animal Interaction, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, Richmond, Virginia, USA.