

Pet Partners Online “Infection Prevention and Control: Therapy Animal Visitation in Healthcare Settings” Course Endorsed by SHEA

Bellevue, WA July 6, 2016 – A new online training course for handlers of therapy animals that visit healthcare settings has received the endorsement of the infection prevention medical organization, The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA). SHEA recommends all animal handlers in healthcare settings participate in a formal training program to address zoonotic diseases and proper hygiene, as defined in the SHEA expert guidance, “Animals in healthcare facilities: recommendations to minimize potential risks.” The guidance addresses the increased presence of animals in acute care hospitals and ambulatory medical settings related to animal-assisted therapy, animal-assisted activities, and research in the context of patient and healthcare provider safety.

“With so many animal-assisted interventions in a variety of healthcare facilities, it is critical that all therapy animal team handlers understand infection prevention. Our 90-minute online course teaches these principles so handlers and healthcare providers have the information for a safe animal-assisted therapy environment,” said Annie Magnant, chief executive officer, Pet Partners. “It is our goal to provide world-class training that helps with the safety of our teams, patients, and caregivers. This course is available to any therapy animal team handler or anyone working in a healthcare environment.” The online course is available at www.petpartners.org

Pet Partners is the nation’s leading organization dedicated to promoting awareness and positively affecting human health through therapy animal team visits and animal-assisted interactions. The organization is also the nation’s leader in educating handlers of therapy animals and believes that safe visits begin with a well-educated human on one end of the leash. Pet Partners has almost 14,000 registered therapy animal teams, many visiting in a healthcare setting. In addition to registering the best-educated handlers and the best-prepared teams, Pet Partners considers part of their mission to educate and elevate the entire field associated with animal-assisted interventions.

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About Pet Partners

Pet Partners is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting animal-assisted therapy, activities and education. Nearly forty years since the organization's inception, the science that proves these benefits has become indisputable. Today, Pet Partners is the nation's largest and most prestigious nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams providing animal-assisted interventions. For more information visit www.petpartners.org.

About SHEA

SHEA is a professional society representing physicians and other healthcare professionals around the world with expertise and passion in healthcare epidemiology, infection prevention and antimicrobial stewardship. Visit SHEA online at www.shea-online.org