



## Effective Communications in Hospitals

*Promoting Meaningful Communications in Health Care*

### **DOG GUIDES**

A specially trained dog guide is invaluable to those who want to and can use one. The independence and mobility a dog guide provides may broaden personal and professional options, improve morale and health, and bolster confidence. The effective dog guide user travels with ease and dignity. However, not all blind people choose to use a dog guide.

### **FACTS ABOUT DOG GUIDES**

1. Dog guide is the politically correct term. "Seeing Eye" and "Guide Dog" are names of training centers, so saying "Seeing Eye Dog" is like using a brand name.
2. Dog guides are available from about 15 training centers across the U.S. Generally, a blind person trains with the dog at the center for a month.
3. Dog guides are usually one of these breeds: Golden Retriever, Labrador Retriever (Black, Yellow, or Chocolate), or German Shepherd.
4. Dog guides help their blind partners by walking the person around obstacles, like telephone poles or street barricades.
5. Dog guides do not know when a traffic light has changed (they are red-green color blind), but they will listen and watch for traffic and will only cross the street when it is clear. Safety is the dog's responsibility.
6. Dog guides do not automatically know where to go; they follow orders that are issued by the blind person as a series of commands such as "Forward," "Left," and "Right."
7. Dog guides wearing harnesses are at work. People should not pet or otherwise distract a dog guide from his job. Ask permission if you want to pet the dog.
8. Dog guides are invisible. At least that's the way you should act if you're wondering how to behave when you meet a blind person.
9. Dog guides can go wherever the blind person goes. That means restaurants, airplanes, and stores. It's the law.
10. When the harness is off, the dog guide is a regular dog - ready to play!