What is Pet Therapy?
Hudson Hospital & Clinics Pet Therapy program consists of volunteers and their therapy dogs. We do not have therapy cats. Therapy dogs are pets that are required to pass and become certified through a Canine Good Citizen, Therapy Dog International, or Delta Society training course. Therapy dogs have great temperaments, get along with other animals, love visiting people of all ages and being petted.

Pet therapy volunteers donate their time and effort because they find it “tremendously rewarding,” and find they “get back much more than they give.” The pet owners also state they “love the joy their dog brings to others.” These individuals and their dogs go out into the world as a team and share that joy with thousands of people every year.

A therapy dog can provide healing to his or her companion or family, as well as hundreds of other people in a therapeutic setting - whether it’s a hospital, a school or a retirement home.

What is the Difference between Services Dogs and Pet Therapy Dogs?
The Americans with Disabilities Act defines service dogs as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that is trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. For example, some dogs are trained to pull wheelchairs, others are taught to alert to the sounds of the telephone, oven timers, alarm clocks, smoke alarms, and even a baby’s cry. Service dogs are not considered pets. Service dogs usually wear a vest to differentiate them from other dogs. Therapy dogs do not typically wear vests. It is requested that people are not to pet services dogs as they are working and it would distract them from their duties, while it is highly recommended to pet therapy dogs.

What are the Benefits of Pet Therapy Visits?
Pet Therapy visits help people feel better emotional, physically, socially and mentally.

Animals help lift a person's mood, giving them something to focus on outside of themselves.

People who are sick, lonely, feeling down, or depressed will often respond to an animal offering genuine affection and unconditional love. Pet therapy visits often garner smiles, eye-contact, physical touch (petting) and communication from the patient.

Being in the presence of or petting a dog can decrease agitation, increase awareness and attention span, and even enhance reminiscence in elderly with dementia. Touching and interacting with a dog can also help lower a person's blood pressure and provide stress relief.

What Happens During a Pet Therapy Visit?
Before each hospital visit, therapy dog owners prepare their dog by bathing and grooming their dog to maintain good health and hygiene.

Some volunteers are scheduled to come on a weekly basis while others come in for visits as their schedule allows. Pet Therapy volunteers meet with the hospital's Recreational Therapist, Emily Breuer, to obtain a list of patients requesting a visit.

Pet Therapy volunteers are responsible for visiting patients, family members, visitors and staff who are interested in a friendly visit from a loving dog. The volunteer will introduce him or herself and their dog and ask if you would like a visit before entering your room.

These dogs are non-threatening and non-judgmental. They don’t expect anything from you and there is no pressure for you to do or say anything. These dogs are here because they love people and they want to help cheer people up. It is OK to refuse visits.
Can I Have My Own Pet Visit Me in the Hospital?

Yes, your personal pet may visit you while you are in the hospital as long as they are up to date on vaccines and in general good health. Pets must be supervised, contained in a cage or on a leash at all times; they may not be left alone with a child.

Animals are not permitted in the café, medicine/storage/sterile supply areas, Surgery, PAR, airborne isolation rooms, and Newborn Nursery. Personal pets are not to visit with other patients in their hospital rooms. Patients and staff must perform hand hygiene after contact with animals. Cats are not allowed to visits with OB patients.

Please check with your nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

Pet Therapy Resources

- **Therapy Dogs International**
  Therapy Dogs International website
  (973)252-9800

- **American Kennel Club**
  (Canine Good Citizen Program)
  American Kennel Club website
  (919)816-3637

- **Delta Society (Pet Partners Program)**
  Delta Society website
  (425)679-5500