Preventing Injury to Employees from Pets/Animals

To assist with the prevention of injuries from patients’ pets, a formalized policy/procedure should be developed. The formalized guidelines should include:

1. Documentation of the type and number of pets prior to admission assessment, if possible, as this is the first time entering the home.

2. Expectation shared, in writing, with patient stating that the pet(s) need to be secured (caged, behind a closed door in another room, put on an anchored leash, etc.) prior to the employee entering the home or arriving at the home, if the animal is outside. The “normal” temperament of the animal should not be considered, as the pet may react in an atypical manner when they are being cared for by staff and “act out” to protect their owner.

3. Set up a notification/calling plan with the patient prior to arrival, so they can secure the animal.

4. At admission assessment, obtain/request documentation of up-to-date pet vaccinations. This prevents unnecessary lab work and/or vaccinations to the employee, if they are exposed (bitten or scratched).