

H.A.B.I.T.

Letter to Facilities That Wish to Establish a New H.A.B.I.T. Program

The first step in establishing a new HABIT program is to have an approved protocol on file in the HABIT office. This first step is very important and must be in place prior to recruiting and placing volunteers.

What is a Program?

- A program is defined as the physical location where animal-assisted therapy or visitation occurs on a regular basis.
- A facility such as a hospital or long-term care facility may have more than one program if sessions occur at different locations in the facility.
(A separate protocol must be on file for all programs even if locations are under the auspices of the same facility.)

What Should Be Included in the Protocol?

Please study the [model protocol](#). This model lists the points which must be covered. After each point suggested wording is provided. However, the model protocol and suggested wording are not meant to be copied and submitted as is. They are meant to be a basis for discussion among all staff directly or indirectly involved in the proposed program. Your final protocol should have input from all departments.

In addition to the HABIT requirement for a protocol, the Tennessee Department of Health's Board for Licensing Health Care Facilities may require that an approved protocol be on file in their Nashville office. Once a protocol is adopted by the facility and approved by HABIT, it may need to be submitted to the Board. Any protocol submitted to the Board must be accompanied by a cover letter signed by the facility administrator. Facility staff should contact the Board if unsure as to whether it is necessary to submit a protocol to the Board. The Board can be contacted at the address and phone below:

Mr. John Bonkowski, Director
Board for Licensing Health Care Facilities
283 Plus Park Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37247-0503
(615) 367-6303

If you have questions regarding the preparation and submission of a protocol, please contact the HABIT office. Submit the completed proposed protocol to the address below for HABIT approval.

HABIT
c/o Department of Comparative Medicine
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Box 1071
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