

# “Going to the Dogs!”

Researchers discovered that a 12-minute visit with man’s best friend helped heart and lung function by lowering blood pressure, diminishing release of harmful hormones and decreasing anxiety among hospitalized heart failure patients.



Dogs love almost everyone without prejudice and they eliminate the language barrier. Often, they are aware of illness and sadness and WANT to provide companionship and comfort; they are both intuitive and compassionate. It is always a joy to see them detect sorrow and watch them lick tears away.

From “Therapy Dogs in the Long-Term Health Care Environment “ by Steve Reiman

"There is no greater therapy than the love of a dog," the sign above my desk proclaims. This animal/human love bond is demonstrated every day in millions of homes around the world. It is also the basis for what is becoming a powerful, common mode of therapy in many long-term health care facilities...

Everyone benefits from the mere presence of these canine health care providers, residents, visitors, and staff. When Therapy Dogs walk the floors of a long term facility, it is often a challenge to separate the furry, four-legged therapists from the staff so that they can perform their special magic upon the residents; that’s okay, because therapy dogs provide a much needed break from the routine and stresses of working in a long term facility environment.


## Types of Therapy Dogs

There are three types of Therapy Dogs. "Facility Therapy Dogs" and "Animal Assisted Therapy Dogs" assist physical and occupational therapists in meeting goals important to a person's recovery. The most common Therapy Dogs are "Therapeutic Visitation Dogs"...A good therapy dog is one who likes meeting people. It must be gentle, adaptable to new environments, and totally non-aggressive. Dogs are working animals and they usually love the work they are bred or trained to do. Interacting with people is the work of therapy dogs and they always seem excited to visit someone new.



**Meet Billy (the furry one) and his trainer, Physical Therapist, Chester Delfin. Billy is a 2 1/2 year old Labradoodle. He has completed his training and will soon take his test to become a Certified Therapy Dog! Residents, staff and visitors all benefit from Billy’s presence at French Prairie!**



 **French Prairie**  
Nursing and Rehabilitation Center  
*A Pinnacle Healthcare Facility*