



Classroom Activity
DR. DOG'S RX

The newest therapist at Carolina's Medical Center (CMC) has his own parking pass, a hospital ID, malpractice insurance - and four legs.

Alar the Sheltie is the only canine licensed to visit youngsters at CMC's Children's Hospital in Charlotte, North Carolina. The two-year-old, tail-wagging therapist with the unique bedside manner makes his rounds every other Tuesday, brightening the day of sick and injured children.

Alar trots to each patient's room with his owners MarieAnn and Doug North, administering healthy doses of love with a nuzzle or lick on the face. If a child is unable to sit up to pet the dog, Alar gently hops onto the bed, to the delight of the patients.

"Pet therapy has been a proven benefit for patients," said Susan Goode, a child life specialist at the hospital. "It's unconditional love between a dog and a child."

Alar's visits are made possible through Therapy Dogs International. After finishing an obedience class and American Kennel Club test to demonstrate confidence and control amidst crowds and strangers, Alar was accepted as a registered member of TDI. As well as visiting the Children's Hospital, Alar goes to another local hospital where he works with stroke victims.

"The children at CMC just love it when Alar shows up," said MarieAnn.

And a young patient's mother added, "He's really cute. Makes it feel like home in here."



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