Proposed Core Standard for Field Test

*FTS1
Does the center have a written policy in practice to prohibit teasing, taunting, harassing or purposely annoying, scaring or irritating the equine?

Interpretation: Activities, exercises or games that provoke an equine’s response solely for the client’s benefit, and without thought for the impression on the equine, are inconsistent with standards of quality, humane horsemanship, which requires mutual respect, understanding, patience and congruent communication.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN policy and personnel interview(s).

FTS2
DNA (does not apply): If the center does not use a mechanical lift.

Are there written safety and emergency procedures directly related to the use and operation of the lift and do they comply with the manufacturer’s safety recommendations?

Interpretation: The intent of this standard is to ensure that the safety and emergency procedures developed for the use of a mechanical lift are consistent with the lift’s manufacturer recommendations and that those who are directly involved in the use of the lift have knowledge of the recommendations and procedures.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN manufacturer and center safety regulations and emergency procedures.

FTS3
DNA (does not apply): If the center does not use a mechanical lift.

Is the mechanical lift:
1. Placed in a location convenient to, but not within, the working area of the arena?
2. Designed and constructed to accommodate the participants and activity for which it is used?

Interpretation: Mechanical lifts can vary in material and size. The working area is defined as those locations where mounted lessons are being held. The mechanical lift should be separated from the working area by a physical barrier that is clearly visible to equines.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of the use of the mechanical lift and interview of personnel.
FTS4
DNA (does not apply): If the center does not use a mechanical lift.

Has the center implemented a program of training and rehearsal in utilizing the lift that prepares personnel, equines, volunteers and participants for the normal and emergency operation of the lift, and is a written list of trained personnel and equines maintained?  

Yes  No  DNA  

Interpretation: Safety and emergency procedures should be practiced regularly. The center administration should determine appropriate rehearsal intervals for safety regulations. Rehearsals should consist of actual drill practice.

Compliance Demonstration: Personnel description of training and rehearsal process and visitor observation of WRITTEN list of trained personnel and equines.

FTS5
DNA (does not apply): If the center does not use a mechanical lift.

Is there written evidence that a systematic maintenance routine is in effect to ensure that the lift and all related equipment is safe and in good repair?  

Yes  No  DNA  

Interpretation: The lift and all related equipment including special or adapted equipment should be inspected regularly. Equipment that is not in good condition should be removed from service immediately.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN evidence and personnel explanation of procedures.

FTS6
DNA (does not apply): If center does not use a mechanical lift.

Does the instructor ensure that a lift equipment safety check is conducted at the beginning of each use?  

Yes  No  DNA  

Interpretation: The instructor is responsible to ensure that an equipment safety check is conducted.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of safety check.
FTS7
Is there a **written** implemented procedure for **written** permission to be obtained prior to the release of information, not covered by HIPAA, to an outside source concerning a participant receiving equine-assisted activities or therapies?

Yes       No

**Interpretation:** Centers may receive requests from outside sources for release of information. All client information is considered confidential and must be treated as such. The center needs to have a written procedure for handling such requests as well as a standardized form to facilitate the request. Such outside sources could include judicial officers and caseworkers or other therapists/medical practitioners or educators. Information covered can include but is not limited to contact information, Individual Education Plan (IEP) or equestrian skills goals.

**Compliance Demonstration:** Visitor observation of WRITTEN procedures and standardized forms randomly selected that include appropriately completed forms. Interview of personnel.

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**Proposed Change to Core Standard for Field Test**

EOM5
Is there an implemented procedure for the appropriately credentialed PATH Intl. professional to check the physical soundness, appearance and attitude of each equine prior to conducting and subsequent to each activity or therapy session, and to excuse equines from further activity until sound in physique and attitude or to remove unsound equines from the program?

Yes       No

**Interpretation:** Physical unsoundness such as lameness, a sore back and saddle sores can affect an equine’s performance and disposition. To maximize the equine’s attitude and readiness to work should also be assessed prior to the participant’s involvement in the activity. An equine unsound in body or mind should be removed from work until the problem is solved.

**Compliance Demonstration:** Visitor observation and personnel description of procedures.
EQM1

Does the center have written criteria for the initial screening of prospective equines appropriate for the activities/therapies offered?

Yes       No

Interpretation: Consideration of a prospective equine for any EAAT program should include, but not be limited to the following:

- Age: Appropriate to the activity and workload
- Soundness of body and mind
- Temperament
- Height, build, conformation and movement appropriate to the activity and participants
- Gender and herd dynamics

Considerations for driving should include but are not limited to the following:

- Be 5 years of age or older
- No stallions may be selected
- Be in sound condition with a good temperament and good driving manners
- Have at least two years of varied driving experience, alone and in company
- Be reliable and obedient under all conditions
- Stand still for harnessing up, putting to, loading and unloading wheelchairs and when instructed
- Have no objection to being overtaken from the rear or having vehicles in front or passing

Considerations for interactive vaulting should include but are not limited to the following:

- Trained in lungeing/longeing
- Be at least six years of age or older
- Have conformation specific to use in interactive vaulting. This includes soundness on all four legs within the gaits used for vaulting and has non-reactive back, loin and neck areas.
- Mares or geldings are recommended
- Size of the equine in relation to the size of the vaulters
- Ability to be approached from all sides

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of criteria and interview of personnel.
**EQM2, EQM3 and EQM4 Combination**

Does the center have a written procedure to evaluate the readiness of new equines for the activities/therapy before placing them in center activities and that includes written procedures for the permanent removal of equines?

| Yes | No |

*Interpretation:* Equines placed in an EAAT program should have demonstrated qualifications that may include but are not limited to the equine’s willingness in the following areas:

- Stand quietly at the halt for grooming, tacking, harnessing or other activities
- Stand quietly during mounting, dismounting or putting to for driving
- Behave appropriately with personnel, volunteers and participants
- Behave appropriately with other equines
- Be around wheelchairs and other adaptive equipment
- Respond appropriately to participant’s aids, both natural and artificial
- Be reliable and obedient under many different working conditions specific to the activity/therapy
- Have sidewalkers or therapists working closely on both sides
- Be led from either side at walk or trot, be longed/lunged and long-lined with a steady, even gait
- Be accepting of special equipment specific to the activity/therapy
- Accept hugging, hair pulling, loud noises, erratic behavior and other disturbances
- Have experience and training specific to the equine activity or therapy

Consideration should also be given to procedures for the permanent removal of equines that do not or are unable to continue working in program activities and therapies or that do not meet program qualifications.

*Compliance Demonstration:* Visitor observation of WRITTEN equine screening and evaluation procedures and WRITTEN equine removal procedures and personnel explanation of the process.
Is there an implemented procedure and written documentation that establishes the following:

1. Limits each equine’s working session to three continuous hours and workday to six hours?
2. Records the number of hours and types of session for each equine per day?
3. Evaluates the equine’s ability to accommodate scheduled activities?
4. Adjusts the number of hours worked per session and per day to protect the equine from being overextended?
5. Observes the following restrictions if an equine is involved in T-HPOT:
   a. Maximum of 30 minutes per session inclusive of transitioning onto and off the equine?
   b. Sessions scheduled on non-consecutive days?
   c. No more than two sessions per day in non-consecutive sessions?
   d. Limited involvement in other equine-assisted activities on the same day in which the equine is involved in T-HPOT?

   Yes       No

_Interpretation:_ A working session is a period of continuous service without any lengthy breaks. A record should be kept of the number of hours and in what activity each equine works, whether it be ground, mounted, driving, interactive vaulting, hippotherapy, tandem hippotherapy, psychotherapy sessions, etc.

Many activities have scheduling recommendations that should be followed. The equine’s condition, attitude, pace and types of riders are factors to be considered when making scheduling decisions. For example, interactive vaulting places additional stress on the equine in that the equine is required to work on a circle, in balance, with vaulter(s) performing movements that require additional balance reactions/responses by the equine. It is recommended that an equine work for a maximum of 60 minutes per lungeing/longeing/vaulting session, with an interval of at least 6 hours between lungeing/longeing/vaulting sessions and no more than 6 lungeing/longeing/vaulting sessions scheduled per week.

Some equines may not be conditioned sufficiently to maintain a schedule based on current recommendations for a specific activity and will need additional adjustments in scheduling. Other factors such as the size, weight, age, attitude and condition of the equine, size, weight and condition of the rider, a high heat index, etc., should also be considered. Centers may want to consider giving each equine one day off per week as working with participants may be stressful.

_Compliance Demonstration:_ Visitor observation of implemented procedure and WRITTEN documentation and personnel description of scheduling procedures.
MMH14

Is there **written** evidence of billing policies and procedures?

| Yes | No |

**Interpretation:** The fees should be reflective of the local treatment/activity fee schedules.

Consultation with insurance companies and other therapy agencies is recommended to learn about third party reimbursement procedures.

Written billing policies should include executive level fee schedules and policies; even if the policy is not to bill participants, it should be in writing.

Written procedures may include specific billing practices such as when payment is due, absentee/makeup policy and other center or program practices.

**Compliance Demonstration:** Visitor observation of WRITTEN policies and written procedures.

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**A8 and A9 Combination**

Is there a **written** contractual agreement between the center and the professional who is licensed/credentialed to practice a recognized health or mental health service and who is providing his/her professional service to the center whether paid or unpaid?

| Yes | No |

**Interpretation:** The professional, whether a paid employee, a contractor or an unpaid provider, should have a written agreement that clearly delineates the relationship between the provider and the organization. The contract may include performance expectations, compensation, responsibility for professional and general liability coverage, length of employment, contract, or donation of services, tax responsibilities, termination guidelines, reference to job description and other personnel policies. Legal counsel should be consulted in regard to these and other possible provisions, such as releases of liability and indemnification language.

**Compliance Demonstration:** Visitor observation of WRITTEN contracts.
*A30 MANDATORY, *A31 MANDATORY and Alternate Helmet Guideline Combination

Are all participants, volunteers and personnel required to wear and do wear protective headgear currently approved for equestrian use by the American Society for Testing and Materials—Safety Equipment Institute (ASTM-SEI), or its international equivalent if outside the U. S., while mounted, vaulting or driving OR is there a written exemption for each non-use of ASTM-SEI or equivalent helmet, including a statement that non-use of helmets in equestrian activities meets all laws of the jurisdiction?

Exemptions to ASTM-SEI or equivalent helmet use must fulfill the following conditions:

1. For alternative helmet use (NOT ASTM-SEI or international equivalent approved for equestrian activities)
   A. Is there written documentation by an appropriately licensed health professional (PT, OT, SLP, MD) AT THE ACTIVITY SITE that specifies the following:
      1. Indicates the specific evaluation and justification for the use of an alternative helmet?
      2. Addresses the risk of using the alternative helmet in equine activities?
      3. Recommends the type of helmet to use?
   B. Do all participants that use alternative helmets meet the following conditions:
      1. Are accompanied by a minimum of a leader and two sidewalkers if mounted session or Able-Bodied Whip (ABW) if driving session.
      2. Are directly supervised by an appropriately licensed health professional (PT, OT, SLP)?
      3. Work in an enclosed arena for all equine-assisted activities and therapies?

2. For non-use of helmets in interactive vaulting
   A. Is there written documentation at the activity site by a PATH Intl. Certified Vaulting Instructor that includes the following:
      1. Written evaluations determining that the vaulter is cognitively and physically able to practice self-preservation skills in case of a fall, can demonstrate a safe dismount and demonstrate and describe the components of a safe fall?
      2. Documentation on each identified vaulter who is not using a helmet as to how that determination was made?
      3. A waiver signed by the vaulter (or legal guardian if vaulter is underage) acknowledging the additional risk of not wearing a helmet?
   B. Are all participants who are not using a helmet in interactive vaulting activities
      1. Participating in an interactive vaulting program operated under the auspices of a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center?
      2. Participating in vaulting activities where the person lungeing/longeing the equine is a PATH Intl. Certified Instructor?

Interpretation: An ASTM-SEI or international equivalent helmet, if outside the US, is required for all mounted, driving and vaulting activities. It is the center’s responsibility to verify currency of ASTM-SEI (or international equivalent standard) approved protective equestrian helmets. (Information can be verified and an approved helmet list found by visiting SEI at www.SEInet.org (headgear, equestrian helmet.) All helmets should fit snugly and have the harness strap adjusted correctly. Helmets should not interfere with vision. It is recommended that participants wear an approved helmet not only while mounted, vaulting or driving but also during groundwork conducted with or near equines (grooming,
tacking, leading or lungeing/lungeing). All alternative (non-ASTM-SEI or international equivalent equestrian approved) helmet use is for very specific medical circumstances and must be documented in writing and supervised by an appropriate professional (PT, OT, SLP, MD) at all times when mounted or driving. Because alternative helmets are not standardized or tested for equestrian activities and sport impact they are to be used with extreme caution. In interactive vaulting programs, if a vaulter is at a higher skill level of vaulting, but not yet ready for a sport vaulting program, it may be safer for these vaulters not to wear a helmet (as long as allowed by local laws). Written documentation should be maintained at the activity site for any participant not using an approved ASTM-SEI, or international equivalent if outside the U.S., equestrian helmet.

**Compliance Demonstration:**
1. Visitor observation of all types of equine activity and therapy sessions offered by the center.
2. Visitor verification of ASTM-SEI, or international equivalent if outside the U.S., tags in randomly selected helmets.
3. For non-use of helmets in interactive vaulting, visitor observation of WRITTEN documentation and interview of personnel.
4. For alternative helmet use, visitor observation of WRITTEN documentation and interview of personnel.