



Issue Brief:

AHA, Inc. Position on the use of the term "Equine Therapy" in the United States

It is the position of the American Hippotherapy Association, Inc. (AHA, Inc.) that both recreational and medical services involving equines should be clearly described and labeled. The term "Equine Therapy" is frequently misused to describe many services and activities involving equines, including the following:

- Occupational Therapy services incorporating equines
- Physical Therapy services incorporating equines
- Speech Language Pathology services incorporating equines
- Mental Health services incorporating equines
- Educational programs incorporating equines
- Adaptive/Therapeutic horseback riding lessons

The term "Equine Therapy" should not be utilized to represent services for humans.

The scope and purpose of the services and activities listed above vary, with the professionals providing these services having widely differing educational backgrounds and qualifications. In the best interest of consumers who receive these services and/or activities, AHA, Inc. recommends the use of clear and transparent terminology.

As such, the use of the term "Equine Therapy" is discouraged when describing therapy services provided to humans as well as recreational activities for people with a disability. Related terms which also do not provide adequate clarity or transparency to describe the service or activity being provided include "**Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT)**", "**Horse Therapy**" and "**Riding Therapy**". Further, the term "**Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT)**" is discouraged as it combines therapy services and recreational activities together and does not give enough information to the consumer about what service is being provided.

AHA, Inc. recommends that professionals, organizations, and members of the media, clearly label and describe the therapy service, educational activity, or recreational activity being provided. For additional guidance or information on appropriate terminology see the [AHA, Inc. Terminology Guidelines](#).

Submitted and approved by the AHA, Inc Board on 09/15/19