

Hospital Bans Seeing-Eye Dog from OR, ADA Suit Follows

FORT WAYNE, IL - Memorial Hospital has barred Dr. Alan Peterson from bringing his seeing-eye dog, Karmen, into the [operating room \(OR\)](#) where he has been employed as an anesthesiologist for the last 8.5 years. Dr. Peterson suffers from early-onset cataracts and has been legally-blind for several years now. A simple operation could restore the sight of this caring professional, but Dr. Peterson has an intense fear of medical procedures.

Until recently Karmen guided him around the hospital and acted as his eyes allowing him to provide safe and efficient [anesthesia care](#) to the people of Fort Wayne. Karmen has been trained to locate the [L3-L4 interspace](#) for labor epidurals, pull patient [gurneys](#) to the correct room, perform [electronic charting](#), and bark 3 times if the patient appears to have a [difficult airway](#). Dr. Peterson has developed a keen sixth sense, which he originally has coined "[The Force](#)" to help him intubate.

Amazingly, Dr. Peterson has not needed assistance for intubations over the past 3 years, from humans that is. There are some reports of Karmen providing jaw thrust and bagging to help Dr. Peterson get out of sticky situations. They are quite the team together and patient safety is at an all-time high in Dr. Peterson's rooms.

Acting Chairman of Surgery at Memorial Hospital, Dr. Stu Berman in a statement to the press states that until the infection risk to operative patients can be adequately assessed he cannot in good conscience allow animals in the operating room.

"Until we can prove that pet dander and biscuit crumbs are safe in the operating arena, we cannot continue to allow dogs in the operating rooms. A [Joint Commission](#) SCIP measure is underway in this field as we speak."

Dr. Peterson believes that darker motives are at work here and has filed a lawsuit against Memorial Hospital under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is seeking immediate reinstatement of himself and Karmen in addition to compensation for the OSHA approved canine surgical masks that he has been

[paying for out of his own pocket.](#)

Opening statements are scheduled for next week.