



## WELCOME TO IRONSTONE FARM

Thank you for your interest in our programs, including our equine-assisted therapy (hippotherapy) services.

Ironstone Farm is the home of Ironstone Therapy and Challenge Unlimited. The Ironstone Therapy program offers Physical and Occupational Therapy using the assistance of equine movement to achieve functional goals established by a licensed physical or occupational therapist. Once therapy goals are met, there is the option of continuing equine assisted activities with the Challenge Unlimited Program - which offers a variety of therapeutic and recreational riding programs, led by a licensed MA riding instructor.

It is our policy and mission to provide equine-assisted therapy to all individuals who can benefit from such services within our ability to safely accommodate participants at the center. We currently serve clients aged 2 and up who have been referred to PT or OT by a physician or Early Intervention Program, and are medically cleared to participate in equine-assisted therapy.

The following information describes our programs, policies and procedures, and registration requirements for therapy. Please take the time to read through them. ***Individuals enrolling in Ironstone Farm programs must complete all necessary paperwork before starting therapy sessions.*** If you have additional questions, please call us at 978-475-4056 x100 (option 4); or email us at [Therapy@IronstoneFarm.org](mailto:Therapy@IronstoneFarm.org)

We look forward to meeting you soon!

Sincerely,

*Kim Murphy*

Program Manager  
Ironstone Therapy, Inc at Ironstone Farm

450 Lowell Street, Andover, MA 01810

978-475-4056 Tel • 978-475-4046 Fax • [info@ironstonefarm.org](mailto:info@ironstonefarm.org) • [www.IronstoneFarm.org](http://www.IronstoneFarm.org)

*Challenge Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization at Ironstone Farm and maintains a policy of nondiscrimination.*



## OUR MISSION

***Our mission is to provide life-changing equine-assisted services that foster the human-horse connection to help individuals and families with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges experience healing and joy while realizing their full potential.***

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***What is Equine Assisted Therapy (hippotherapy)?***

This is one of the services offered at Ironstone Farm. Licensed physical and occupational therapists work as part of a team with equine professionals and volunteers, using the horse's movement as a therapeutic tool, to help clients more effectively reach their therapy goals. Carefully graded motor and sensory input can be provided to the child through the movement of the horse to assist with improving strength, postural control, balance, coordination, attention and focus, engagement, and communication (to name just a few of the benefits commonly seen).

### ***What does a typical therapy session look like?***

Each 30 minute session is led by a licensed physical or occupational therapist, who will assess each individual client and develop a plan of care in order to establish and meet functional therapy goals. Once it is determined that the movement of the horse will be beneficial in achieving those goals, a therapy "team" will assist their client through each session. A lead volunteer will walk with the horse on a lead line, while the therapist and a supporting volunteer will sidewalk next to the horse. The therapist will engage the client in therapeutic activities while encouraging postural stability and control.

### ***What clothing is appropriate? What about a helmet?***

***Closed toe shoes and a helmet are required to participate in equine assisted activities.***

Dress comfortably and appropriately for the season. Our indoor arena is heated to 45 degrees in winter and cooled to 85 degrees in summer- for the comfort and safety of the horses. Ironstone Farm does have helmets to loan to participants, but we strongly encourage each family to purchase their own after we determine proper size/fit and appropriateness of this unique therapy. We require that clients use an equestrian ASTM/SEI-approved helmet. For clients who are unable to be safely fit with an equestrian helmet, the therapist will assess for the appropriate use of a soft, lightweight infant-style head guard.

### ***What happens once therapy goals are met?***

Once all therapy goals are met, or a plateau has been reached, you may choose to continue in our Challenge Unlimited therapeutic riding program if recommended by your therapist. The program manager can discuss payment options with you at that time.

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## HOURS OF OPERATION

Week Day	Office Hours
Monday	9:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Tuesday	9:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Wednesday	11:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Thursday	9:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Friday	9:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday	8:30 AM - 2:00 PM
Sunday	<b>**CLOSED**</b>

**\*\*Therapy hours** are based on the schedules and availability of our current staff OTs and PTs and occasionally change throughout the year

## OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

**Therapy team:**

[therapy@ironstonefarm.org](mailto:therapy@ironstonefarm.org)

(978) 475- 4056 option 4 (x100)

**For all time sensitive calls, please call (978) 475- 4056 option 1.**

**This is our same-day cancellation line which is staffed during all open office hours.**

**Emails may not always be monitored in real time. Thank you!**

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## FARM HOLIDAY CLOSURES 2025

<p>Wednesday, January 1 THROUGH Saturday, January 4</p>	<p><b>New Year's Day BREAK WEEK</b></p>
<p>Monday, February 17</p>	<p><b>Presidents' Day</b></p>
<p>Saturday, May 24 Monday, May 26</p>	<p><b>Memorial Day weekend</b></p>
<p>Friday, July 4 Saturday, July 5</p>	<p><b>Independence Day weekend</b></p>
<p>Monday, August 25 THROUGH Monday, September 1</p>	<p><b>SUMMER BREAK WEEK Labor Day</b></p>
<p>Saturday, October 11 Monday, October 13</p>	<p><b>Columbus Day weekend</b></p>
<p>Thursday through Saturday, November 27, 28, 29</p>	<p><b>Thanksgiving weekend</b></p>
<p>Monday, December 22 THROUGH Saturday, December 3</p>	<p><b>WINTER BREAK WEEKS</b></p>

\*\*Ironstone Farm does **not** follow public schools for all holiday closures, election days, or professional development days

## WEATHER CLOSURES

Ironstone Farm uses the Andover Public School System as a **guide** for weather closings, but we ultimately make our own decision whether to remain open or to cancel sessions. In the event that Ironstone needs to cancel your session due to weather issues, the farm will email and/or call you as soon as the decision is made.

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## ESTABLISHED FEES \*\*prices set to increase April 2025

For Physical/Occupational Therapy the rates will be as follows:

<u>SERVICE PROVIDED</u>	<u>CHARGE</u>
<b>New Client Evaluation</b> <i>A 30 to 45-minute unmounted evaluation, depending on eval complexity If therapist chooses to do part of the session with the horse, the \$25 horse fee will be applied</i>	<b>\$175.00</b>
<b>Established Client Evaluation/Re-Evaluation</b> <i>A 30-minute session, part or all will be mounted on the horse, depending on the therapist's assessment needs</i>	<b>\$85.00</b> Plus horse fee
<b>30 min Treatment Session</b> <i>A 30-minute session, part or all will be mounted on the horse, depending on the client's goals for therapy</i>	<b>\$85.00</b> Plus horse fee
<b>45 min Treatment Session</b> <i>A 45-minute session, up to 30 min mounted, at least 15 min unmounted, if therapist and client agree that the extra unmounted time is beneficial to reaching the client's goals for therapy</i>	<b>\$122.50</b> Plus horse fee
<b>Horse Fee per Visit*</b> <i>This Fee is not covered by insurance</i>	<b>\$25.00</b>

**\*A \$25 horse fee is added on for all mounted sessions** - This is a fee that Ironstone Therapy, Inc is responsible for paying to Ironstone Farm for the use of the facility and horses. It goes towards the facility maintenance/operation and care of the herd. **This fee is NOT billable to insurance companies** and, therefore will be the responsibility of the client, in addition to any copays, coinsurance, deductibles, etc.

**Please let us know if you have any questions about the fee structure!**

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## IRONSTONE THERAPY PROGRAM GUIDELINES

### Enrollment Procedures

Please make sure that you read and understand all information regarding enrollment for therapy and the terms of our Fee Agreement.

We currently have a waitlist for therapy, but once an open weekly spot has been identified, a full paperwork packet will be sent for you to complete. Forms included will be:

- a. **Emergency Authorization, Assumption of Risks and Liability Release**
- b. **Client Consent/HIPAA information**
- c. **Client Information** (may have been previously completed when added to the waitlist)
- d. **Fee Schedule and Agreement**
- e. **Client History/Intake**
- f. **Physician's Referral**

**PLEASE NOTE:** The referring physician must include a diagnosis (ICD-10) code and prescribe either a PT or OT evaluation or treatment as indicated to include the use of equine assistance.

**If you will be using your medical insurance to cover a portion of the cost of therapy, please attach a copy of both sides of your insurance card along with your completed paperwork.**

Ironstone Therapy will contact your insurance company or other third party payor for approval of treatment coverage before sessions are scheduled. Please be aware that eligibility or pre-approval from your insurance company is not a guarantee of payment. You are ultimately responsible for payment, authorizations, and the number of authorized visits.

Once we receive all completed forms, we will schedule an initial **unmounted** evaluation with one of our therapists. Your therapist will then develop a medically oriented treatment plan, including long and short term therapeutic goals. Once treatment begins, your therapist will reassess for progress towards these goals on a regular basis and revise the treatment plan, with the ultimate goal of transitioning into our Challenge Unlimited Program or discharge from therapy once goals are met.

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## Ironstone Therapy Policies

### **Cancellations:**

If you are unable to attend your therapy sessions, we ask that you notify the office by phone or email as soon as possible. **Please do not rely on informing your therapist of scheduling changes.**

***\* IF YOU ARE CALLING TO CANCEL ON THE SAME DAY OF YOUR SESSION:  
PLEASE USE OPTION 1 FOR OUR SAME-DAY CANCELLATION LINE***

If you have three consecutive cancellations, or miss more than 25% of your scheduled sessions within a 4 month period, we reserve the right to suspend treatment and to offer that time to another client on a permanent basis. We will make every attempt to find you another suitable therapy time.

If you are running late to your lesson, please call the office. Ironstone has a 15-minute late policy, where the horse will be put away if you are more than 15-minutes late and do not notify anyone. Arriving late will not result in extra time on the horse, so please plan accordingly.

If your scheduled therapist is unable to work on a day on which you have an appointment, we will make every effort to provide a substitute therapist. If a substitute is not available, we reserve the right to call and cancel your session. We will try to find a make-up session in the same week for you if possible.

### **Clothing/helmets:**

Proper shoes and helmets are required to participate in all equine assisted activities. Dress comfortably and appropriately for the season. Our indoor arena IS heated and air conditioned - but for the safety and health of our horses, it is heated only to 45 degrees in winter and cooled to 85 degrees in summer. Closed toe AND closed heel shoes are a must - anyone with sandals, crocs, flip flops, etc may not approach a horse.

Ironstone Farm does have helmets to loan to participants. However, once you know the size of helmet needed, we encourage each family to purchase their own. **We do require that clients use an equestrian ASTM/SEI approved helmet.** In cases where a client is unable to safely use an equestrian helmet, the therapist will assess for the appropriate use of a soft, lightweight infant-style head guard.

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### **Supervision of clients and children:**

Ironstone is a working farm, with many different therapeutic sessions occurring at the same time. It is very important for the safety of our clients, riders, handlers, staff, visitors, and horses that all children, when not involved in their therapy session, remain beside their accompanying adult. Sudden unexpected movements like running, and loud/unexpected noises have the potential to startle our horses while focused on performing their very important job. If any client or guest behaves in an unsafe manner, we may ask that they are removed from the premises for the safety of all.

**In addition, all clients with a diagnosis, and especially those with a seizure diagnosis or epipen, need a parent or caregiver within eyesight at all times. Please inform the therapist if you need to step away for a moment so we will know where to quickly find you if needed.**

### **Observation of therapy sessions:**

A viewing area is provided for observation of your child's or family member's therapy session. Only the therapist and the client receiving therapy are allowed to enter the treatment area of the indoor arena. If the parent or caregiver is needed to assist with the client's transition into the session, the therapist will invite one parent or caregiver into the treatment area. Please follow all directions given by the therapist for a safe and successful transition.

Parents or caregivers are welcome to follow behind if the therapist takes the client on our trail. PLEASE remember to stay at least a horse's length behind the pony, do not walk up next to the pony or approach the pony, and be aware of other instructors and horses on the trail so you do not compromise the safety of their lessons.

### **Billing and payment:**

If your insurance company has been verified as covering your therapy services with IT, Atlantic Medical Billing will be submitting claims on our behalf. They will monitor insurance payments, determine your financial responsibility, and send out paper bills each month. For convenience, Ironstone Therapy can send invoices to your email address monthly, where payment by credit card is accepted (it will show Ironstone Therapy as the sender, and come from [quickbooks@notification.intuit.com](mailto:quickbooks@notification.intuit.com) - please make sure the address is not blocked). All horse fees will be invoiced monthly at \$25 per session; all insurance copays, coinsurance, or deductible payments will be invoiced monthly AFTER your insurance company has made payment on each date of service.

For clients paying directly without a third party payor, you have the option to bring a check weekly to leave in our locked box inside the welcome center; or we can email your invoices monthly for CC payment.

**\*There will be a \$25 late payment fee added to your account if invoices are not paid within 60 days of the date initially emailed/mailed to you; and \$25 additionally every 30 days after.**

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## **Additional Safety Regulations**

- There is **NO SMOKING/VAPING** allowed on the property of Ironstone Farm.
- Please leave your pet(s) at home. With regards to service animals, please check with the office before visiting the farm.
- Please do not feed the animals.
- **Please park in designated areas only.** Observe the “No Parking” signs and spaces allotted for the pick-up and drop-off of clients. Please do not sound your horn/car alarm while on Ironstone Farm property!
- Please do not use umbrellas on the property, they can startle our horses.
- Please do not go anywhere on the property without a staff member. We are a working horse farm and anyone on property must be accompanied by staff or in the designated viewing areas provided.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Ironstone Farm was founded in 1960 by owner Richard Donovan as a facility for thoroughbred horses. A nonprofit called Challenge Unlimited was created out of the Donovan family's desire to share the farm with people whose lives have been challenged by disability. In 2001, Challenge Unlimited purchased the farm.

Ironstone Therapy, Inc was founded in 1997 by the Challenge Unlimited Board of Directors as a separate non-profit entity and part of Ironstone Farm. Its purpose was, and remains, to provide medically based Physical, Occupational, and Speech therapies.

Today, Ironstone Farm provides beneficial therapy for individuals with a wide range of physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities. Our primary programs are Challenge Unlimited and Ironstone Therapy. Both use a horse's unique ability to enhance a person's movements, develop strength, and inspire hope and encouragement. Ironstone Farm also offers recreational riding lessons for people of all ages and abilities.

Ironstone Farm is home to over 25 equines that live on property all year-round. Our versatile herd allows us to accommodate almost every rider hoping to join us for lessons and programs. Our staff of instructors come to us with extensive knowledge in foundational horsemanship as well as riding at all levels. Every rider who comes to Ironstone Farm will have therapeutic goals woven into their curriculum, regardless of what program they fall under.

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## **INSURANCE VERIFICATION OF BENEFITS: SUGGESTED QUESTIONS**

Your insurance company may cover some or all of the cost of Physical or Occupational therapy at Ironstone Farm. The IT program manager will call your insurance company to verify your coverage and benefits. However, it is not only helpful but also your responsibility to also verify your specific plan details, as you are ultimately responsible for payment for services rendered. The following are examples of questions you may want to ask when speaking with your Insurance company.

### **Calling to verify benefits for outpatient occupational or physical therapy services:**

1. Ironstone Therapy is in-network with HPHC; out of network for others. Our NPI number is 1407918394. If out of network - ask if there are benefits to cover an out-of-network or non-participating provider.
2. Does coverage run on a calendar year or a plan year- if plan year, when does it start?
3. What is my deductible? After my deductible is met, what is my copay or coinsurance?
4. Is there a limit on the number of visits per plan year? Is that for PT/OT only, or is it for all therapies combined?

IF AUTISM DIAGNOSIS: Is there an exclusion on the maximum number of therapy visits allowed/ do I have unlimited visits?

5. How many visits have I already used? (You will want to keep track of your number of therapy visits and let the IT program manager know when you reach the limit)
6. Do I need an MD referral or a prior authorization?
7. Is re-certification needed? After how many visits?
8. Is any specific service excluded? (CPT treatment codes used: 97530; 97110; 97112; 97532; 97535)
9. Are there any exclusions to my policy?

The best approach in navigating the insurance process is for both Ironstone Therapy and you as a member to gather as much information as possible. Please let us know if you have any questions.

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