HELPING PATIENTS HEAL FROM ILLNESS AND INJURY IS NOT JUST A JOB FOR DOCTORS. IN FACT, PATIENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI’S WOMEN AND CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM SOME SPECIAL FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS.

WITHIN MU HEALTH CARE’S HOSPITALS AND CLINICS, THE WAGS THERAPY DOG PROGRAM INCLUDES 18 DOGS THAT HAVE BEEN TESTED, CERTIFIED, AND TRAINED TO PROVIDE PATIENTS WITH BOTH COMFORT AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT. MU HEALTH CARE’S CHIEF PATIENT EXPERIENCE OFFICER KEVIN GWIN HAS SEEN FIRSTHAND THE BENEFITS THE DOGS CAN BRING.

“I think sometimes patients feel isolated, they get out here and it’s lonely, it’s boring. The dogs are something to look forward to and when they visit the whole unit comes alive.”

A 2018 STUDY SHOWS THAT THERAPY ANIMALS CAN HELP INTENSIVE CARE PATIENTS TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR RECOVERY. RESEARCH ALSO HAS SHOWN THAT THERAPY DOGS IN HOSPITALS REDUCE PATIENTS’ BLOOD PRESSURE AND LOWER PAIN PERCEPTION. NOW THAT’S SOMETHING TO WAG YOUR TAIL ABOUT!

I’M BRIAN CONSIGLIO, WITH A MIZZOU SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE.