

	Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements			
	Program/Dept:	Quality & Patient Relations	Document Category:	Quality & Patient Relations
	Developed by:	Health Equity Committee	Original Approval Date:	December 2013
	Approved by:	Quality Council	Reviewed Date:	December 2016, September 2019
	Review Frequency:	3 years	Revised Date:	June 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote patient and family centred care to persons with disabilities in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

In 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* came into effect. In January 2008, the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* and the first of five standards came into force. In July 2011, the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)*, Ontario Regulation 191/11, as part of the AODA came into effect.

In July 2016, changes introduced under the AODA brought all accessibility standards – including the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* – into the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)*, Ontario Regulation 191/11.

Scope

This policy applies to members of the Hospital Community at Halton Healthcare, which includes all employees, physicians, health care professionals, students, researchers, interns, volunteers, patients, families, visitors, advisory groups, community-based partners, suppliers, contractors, and other health care and business partners with Halton Healthcare.

Staff, physicians, and volunteers with disabilities will identify themselves through Health, Safety & Wellness to ensure that the relevant managers are made aware of any disability that requires accommodation.

Policy

Consistent with the four core principles of the AODA (Dignity, Independence, Integration and Equal Opportunity), Halton Healthcare is committed to creating an accessible environment that strives at all times to provide care and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities including both visible and non-visible disabilities, disabilities of differing severity and where the effects of the disability may be intermittent in nature. We are committed to giving people with disabilities equal opportunity to access and benefit from our services as other individuals would have. These services will be integrated in the same place and in a similar manner as individuals without disabilities unless an alternate measure is necessary.

Implementation of this policy will be guided by the following principles and policy statements:

- The Hospital complies with all relevant laws and regulations, including the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements

- All policies support and embody the Hospital’s core values of Compassion, Accountability and Respect.
- The safety of Hospital patients is a priority.
- The Hospital is committed to fostering a safe, healthy, positive, and inclusive environment that respects the personal worth, dignity and diversity of each Individual.
- The Hospital is committed to providing respectful care that focuses on the unique needs of individuals.
- The Hospital is committed to preventing and removing barriers for persons with disabilities, through its Multi-year Accessibility Plan.
- Accessibility criteria will be incorporated into the Hospital’s operational processes. Accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner, at no additional cost to the person with a disability. Information about a disability is personal and private and must be treated confidentially.

Roles/Responsibilities

All members of the Hospital Community at Halton Healthcare, which includes all employees, health care professionals, students, researchers, interns, volunteers, and all others, who have a working relationship with the hospital, will interact with people with disabilities in a manner that supports the dignity and independence of the individual.

Procedure

This policy replaces *Accessibility – Customer Service*. This policy encompasses the requirements of the Customer Service Standards as well as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR) O. Reg. 191/11 developed under the AODA which includes:

- General Requirements
- Information and Communication Standards
- Employment Standards
- Transportation Standards

Halton Healthcare will maintain compliance with the IASR by continuing to move towards its vision of accessibility. Halton Healthcare will continue to evolve its policies and procedures in accordance with the AODA and its standards.

Customer Service Standards

- Service Animals - The Hospital supports persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal (refer to Service Animals Policy and Procedure for additional information).

Support Persons - Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have the support person present while on the premises unless it becomes a health or safety risk. In this instance, other provisions will be made to ensure that the individual receives the assistance otherwise provided by the support person. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek the consent of the person with the disability prior to discussing confidential information in front of the support person.

Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements

Service Disruption - The Hospital is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions at its facilities and services may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within its control or knowledge.

It is recognized that these disruptions could impede the ability of individuals with disabilities to access the Hospital and its services. Therefore, the Hospital will make reasonable effort to provide advance notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. The notice will be made available by posting the information on the premises and/or posted on the Hospital's website or by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

In the event of an unexpected disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the Hospital will provide notice as soon as possible.

Feedback – Halton Healthcare has a process in place for receiving and responding to feedback and will ensure that those processes are provided in accessible formats and with communication supports, upon request. Halton Healthcare posts accessibility documents on its public website and as such, is available to members of the public. Feedback related to the accessibility of our services that is gathered through Patient Relations is forwarded to the Health Equity Committee for consideration in accessibility planning processes

Training – Halton Healthcare will provide training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario's accessibility legislation and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members.

Halton Healthcare has and will ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessibility laws through mandatory annual e-Learning for existing employees, and for new employees as they join our Hospital. If any changes are made to this policy or the requirements, training will be provided. Halton Healthcare will maintain a record of the dates when training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Training includes a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the requirements of the Customer Service Standards, and instruction about the following:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
- How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability.

Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements

- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods, services or facilities.

General Requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements (IASR)

Establishment of Accessibility Policies as outlined above

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan – Halton Healthcare's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will outline the ways Halton Healthcare will prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the standards developed under the AODA.

This plan will be reviewed and updated regularly as the organization grows and expands, and established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the Halton Healthcare Health Equity committee.

Halton Healthcare's Multi-year Accessibility Plan is posted to both internal and external websites and available in alternate formats upon request.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities – Accessibility criteria and features will be incorporated when procuring or acquiring goods, services, and facilities as outlined in the plan in collaboration with Shared Services West (SSW) our shared services provider, and all other service providers, contractors or agents.

Self-service Kiosks – Halton Healthcare will take the following steps to ensure employees consider the needs of people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks:

- Ensure current kiosks meet accessibility criteria
- Ensure new kiosks meet criteria in redevelopment projects

Information and Communications Standard

Halton Healthcare is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their individual information and communication needs and work with them to ensure communication is effective.

Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information – Halton Healthcare is pleased to provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

Accessible Websites and Web Content – Halton Healthcare will continue to make all websites and content on those sites conform to WCAG 2.0

Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports – Halton Healthcare will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports for people with disabilities, including making available interpreters for American Sign Language (ASL) where required (please refer to [Interpretation Services Policy and Procedure](#) for more information). This will be done in consultation with the person making the request, and provided in a manner that takes into account the person’s accessibility needs.

Employment Standards

Halton Healthcare is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Workplace Emergency Response Information – Halton Healthcare will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation. This plan will be provided as soon as practicable and will be reviewed in accordance with the requirement of the AODA.

Recruitment and Selection – Halton Healthcare will create an accessible work environment for all employees across the employment life cycle in accordance with the requirements and timelines set out in the Employment Standards and existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code to accommodate people with disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to general recruitment, assessment or selection, performance management, return to work, redeployment, career development and individual accommodation plans.

Transportation Standard

Halton Healthcare does not provide transportation, however, does use services provided by third parties where we ensure arranged transportation meets patient and staff needs.

Definitions

According to the AODA, “Disability” is defined as:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or developmental disabilities;
- c) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits are claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements

Related Documents

- [Service Animals Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Interpretation Services Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Accommodation and Return-to-Work Plans](#)
- [Early and Safe Return to Work: Policy and Program](#)
- [Early and Safe Return to Work Program – Non-Occupational Injury or Illness](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation for Persons Requiring Assistance](#)
- [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#)
- [Patient and Family Feedback Management Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Universal Pre-Placement Medical Requirements](#)

Key Words

Accessibility, Accommodation

Reviewed by/Consultation with

SVP Clinical Operations
Chief Nurse Executive
SVP Human Resources Planning & Organizational Development
Director - Quality & Patient Relations
Director - Health, Safety & Wellness
Director – Human Resources
Director – Recruitment & Organizational Development

Signed by

Title

References

The Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act. The Ontarians With Disabilities Directorate - Ontario Regulation 429/07
http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/what/AODA_2005.htm

Blind Persons Rights’ Act - R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).
Support
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90b07_e.htm

Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities:
Recommendations of CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) <http://www.cdc.gov/mmWR/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm>

Guidelines for animal-assisted interventions in health care facilities:

Accessibility – Integrated Accessibility Standards Requirements

Writing Panel of Working Group, Lefebvre SL, et al., Guidelines for animal-assisted interventions in health care facilities, American Journal of Infection Control, 2008 Mar;36(2):78-85.