

PERTH AND SMITHS FALLS DISTRICT HOSPITAL
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

TITLE: Accessibility

CREATION DATE: March 15, 2010

APPROVED BY: Senior Leadership Council

Policy:

The Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) is committed to eliminating barriers and improving access for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity. The PSFDH permits persons with a disability to use their own assistive devices when accessing services at the Hospital.

In June, 2005 the Ontario Government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. The purpose of this enhanced Act is to develop, implement and enforce standards of accessibility for all Ontarians. Sunnybrook's Accessibility Policy is consistent with the AODA, 2005 and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 [See Appendix].

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline practices and procedures in place at Sunnybrook to help identify and remove barriers that impede a person's ability to access care and services.

Definitions:

Assistive Device: Assistive devices and measures are supports made available by providers to improve access to care for patients with disabilities. For example, wheelchairs, volunteers, real-time captioning services (on-screen typing of what speakers are saying), sign language interpreters or deaf-blind interveners. Other examples include, Telephone Teletypes (TTY) to communicate with clients who are deaf, hard of hearing, have speech impairments or are deaf-blind (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

Last Reviewed Date: 01-16-2022 00:00:00	Next Review Date: 01-16-2025 00:00:00
Distribution Groups: none	Signing Authority: President and CEO, VP of Clinical Services, VP of Finance and Support Services
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Disability: According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, a "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 a developmental disability
- 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 were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go (Sunnybrook Accessibility Working Group Accessibility Plan).

Service Animals: Service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities. Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

Personal Assistive Devices: For the purpose of this policy, Personal Assistive Devices are personal supports used by persons with disabilities that enable them to carry out the activities of daily living and allow access to hospital services. Patient-owned equipment such as power-mobility devices (power wheelchairs or scooters) are regarded as Personal Assistive Devices.

Support Persons: A "Support Person" accompanies a person with a disability, in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure. A Support Person may be a paid professional, a volunteer, family member or friend of the person with a disability (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

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Procedure:

1. The PSFDH will ensure we are identifying and removing barriers to access for people with disabilities by: (please refer to the other policies and practices listed in Appendix A for specific strategies):
2. Encouraging people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to improve access to the PSFDH goods and services.
3. Enabling people with disabilities to access our goods and utilize our services by offering assistive devices and measures.
4. Communicating with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Allowing people with disabilities to bring their guide dog or service animal with them to areas of the premises that are open to the public.
6. Permitting people with disabilities who use a support person to accompany them and ensuring that a person with a disability has access to his or her support person while on our premises.
7. Training staff, physicians, volunteers and students about key principles and accessibility strategies and tools (i.e Better Safe than Sorry Mandatory Annual Education)
8. Establishing a process for people to provide feedback on how goods or services are delivered and explaining how the PSFDH will respond to any feedback and what action will be taken. It is the responsibility of every staff member to be attentive to the concerns of patients/residents, their families and visitors and to resolve concerns related to accessibility.
9. There are a number of strategies that are available to patients/ families/staff and physicians to provide feedback regarding accessibility.

References & Appendix:**Relevant Policies, Procedures and Practice**

- Patient Complaint Policy
- Patient-Owned Equipment for In-Hospital Use
- Service Animals
- PSFDH Patient Rights and Responsibilities
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

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Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation Standards of Accessibility under the AODA

- **Customer Service:** Service delivery to the public; also includes business practices, employee training
- **Transportation:** This standard needs to reflect a variety of environments, financial capabilities of users/providers and the differing modes of travel including conventional and specialized modes, and on-demand taxi services
- **Information and Communication:** Information and communications provided to the consumer or end-user through print, telephone, electronic devices, and in person; also includes publications and software applications
- **The Built Environment:** Access to, from and within buildings and outdoor spaces; also includes counter heights, aisle and door widths, parking, signage, pedestrian access routes and signal systems
- **Employment:** Hiring and retaining employees; also includes employment practices, policies and processes such as job advertisements and interviewing

Principles of Customer Service:

- **Dignity:** Refers to policies, procedures and practices that treat a person with a disability as a client who is as valued and deserving of effective and full service as any other client. They do not treat people with disabilities as an afterthought or force them to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. Service delivery needs to take into account how people with disabilities can effectively access and use services and show respect for these methods.
- **Independence:** In some instances, independence means freedom from control or influence of others' freedom to make your own choices. In other situations, it may mean the freedom to do things in your own way. People who may move or speak more slowly should not be denied an opportunity to participate in a program or service because of this factor.
- **Integration:** Integrated services are those services that allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other clients. Integration means that policies, practices and procedures are designed to be accessible to everyone including people with disabilities. Sometimes integration does not serve the needs of all people with disabilities. In these cases, it is necessary to use alternate measures to provide goods or services. Alternate measures are ways of serving people that are not completely integrated into the regular business activities of the organization, for example, email.

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- **Equal Opportunity:** Equal opportunity means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of services, it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way you provide services as others. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience.

Revision History:

April 30, 2013

June 2017

December 2021

January 16, 2022

Last Reviewed Date: 01-16-2022 00:00:00	Next Review Date: 01-16-2025 00:00:00
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