

SECTION: Accessibility

DIRECTIVE: III-A-20

SUBJECT: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Customer Services Standard  
AUTHORITY: Chief Executive Officer

EFFECTIVE DATE			REVISED DATE			POLICY	X	PROCEDURE	X
MON	DAY	YEAR	MON	DAY	YEAR				
02		2010	02		2013	Applies to: ALL			
			02	09	2016				

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Customer Service Standard**

#### **PURPOSE:**

- To comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Customer Service Standard.
- To provide staff, physicians and volunteers with guidelines for providing patient and family centered care to people with disabilities.

#### **POLICY:**

The AODA was created to ensure that all people with disabilities are treated with respect, dignity and equity. West Haldimand General Hospital is committed to providing respectful care that focuses on the unique needs of the individual.

West Haldimand General Hospital will train all employees and will educate physicians, volunteers, vendors and others who deal with the public on our behalf on the following:

- The purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- The policies and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of service animals or a support person.
- The assistive devices available at the hospital and how to use them including alternative formats for people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing services.

#### **GUIDELINES:**

West Haldimand General Hospital will support people with disabilities utilizing the following methodologies:

##### ***Accessible Information:***

West Haldimand General Hospital will employ a variety of formats when possible to support information dissemination and dialogue. These may include but are not limited to large print, email, simplified summaries, illustrations, verbal communication and certified interpreters. Any cost associated will be covered by the originating department.

##### ***Assistive Devices:***

The following devices are available to assist patients, staff, physicians and volunteers in communicating effectively:

- Pocket Talkers: Pocket talkers are available to amplify conversation for individuals who are hard of hearing.
- TTY (teletypewriter) allows the user to send a message over the phone through a keyboard. The number to contact is 1-800-268-9242
  - TTY Uniphone for inpatient use is located on the third floor
  - TTY pay phone is located at the front lobby.
- Bell Relay: The Bell Relay Service (BRS) allows hearing and speech impaired people to communicate with other persons by phone with specially trained operators acting as intermediary. Relay operators are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To contact an individual by phone using the BRS call 1-800-268-9243.

***Use of Service Animals and Support Persons:***

West Haldimand General Hospital welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. When a patient, family member or visitor enters the hospital with a service animal every effort will be made to accommodate and ensure that the surroundings will allow the individual to effectively maintain their relationship with the animal. If this is not possible due to health or safety concerns, a mutually agreed upon location for the animal may be identified for a limited time. In this instance, other provisions will be made to ensure that the individual receives the support otherwise provided by the service animal.

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 support 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.

***Notice of Temporary Disruption:***

West Haldimand General Hospital will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Information on disruptions will be provided where people with disabilities receive information including the WHGH website, the main phone line, overhead announcements when appropriate and notification to all hospital employees. Patients may also be contacted by phone prior to an appointment to advise them of the change/disruption and alternatives.

***Feedback Process:***

West Haldimand General Hospital wants to meet and exceed the customer service standards and provide patient and family centered care to people with disabilities. Feedback is welcomed and appreciated. Everyone is encouraged to provide feedback in a variety of formats including but not limited to:

- Contacting us through the website [www.whgh.ca](http://www.whgh.ca)
- Random patient satisfaction surveys

***Training:***

West Haldimand General Hospital will ensure appropriate levels of training to all employees, volunteers, students, agents and others who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of WHGH as well as those who are involved in the development and approvals of policies, practices and procedures dealing with the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties.

This training will be provided as soon as practicable and in keeping with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Records of training will be kept that includes the dates on which training occurred and the number of persons trained.

Training will include the following topics:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the assistive devices available at WHGH
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the WHGH's goods and services
- WHGH's policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods and services to the public and other third parties

Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to policies, practices and procedures dealing with the provision of goods and services to the public and other third parties.

***Availability of the Accessible Customer Service Documents:***

West Haldimand General Hospital shall prepare any additional documents describing its policies, practices and procedures as may be required by Ontario Regulation 429/07 and, upon request, shall give a copy of such documents to any person. Further, WHGH shall notify persons to whom it provides goods and services that the documents under Ontario Regulation 429/07 are available upon request.

WHGH shall give the person the documents, or the information contained in the documents described above, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

***Modifications to this or other Policies:***

WHGH is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. WHGH will consider the modification or removal of any policies that do not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities on an ongoing basis.

***Definitions:***

The AODA and Ontario Regulation 429/07 contain and refer to various definitions that are relevant to this policy, some of which are set out below.

**Barrier** means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice ("obstacle").

**Disability** means,

- (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 co-ordination, 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 ("handicap")

**Guide dog** means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations (Blind Persons' Rights Act 1990 s1 (1))

**Service animal** means an animal acting as a service animal for a person with a disability,

- (a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability

**Support person** means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services

**References**

III-A-10 – Animal Visitation Policy

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Customer Service Standards (AODA)

Animal Visits III-A-10

Privacy- Protecting Personal Information III-P-153

Accessibility Plan