

Title:	Providing Access for People with Disabilities		
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Introduction

Principles

St. Michael's Hospital ("SMH") is committed to fostering a healthy and positive environment that recognizes and respects the personal worth, dignity and diversity of each member of the Hospital community and its clientele.

Purpose

1. This policy ensures that all members of the SMH community are aware of the benefits of achieving accessibility for people with disabilities; and know the rights and responsibilities of employees, physicians, students, volunteers, patients and other clients with regard to accessibility and client service;
2. Consistent with our Mission and Values, this policy establishes accessibility standards at SMH in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and in keeping with *Ontario Regulation 429/07 and 191/11*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *Human Rights Code*;
3. This policy, which is pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 3* and *O. Reg. 191/11, s.3* is designed to bring about systemic and organizational change that will foster a healthy, respectful and positive Hospital and work environment by accomplishing the following objectives:

- Outline the steps required to implement SMH’s accessibility plan (See Appendix A) to achieve equity, fairness, and due process as articulated in its Mission and Values;
 - Foster a positive Hospital environment through proactive measures, barrier-free systems analysis and enforcement;
 - Ensure that all members and clients of the SMH community are treated equitably and with dignity and respect;
 - Address breaches of this policy and settle disputes quickly, fairly and as close to the source as possible;
 - Ensure that all members of the SMH community are aware of their rights and responsibilities under this policy; and
 - Provide proactive education and organizational training and development aimed at providing an environment that is healthy, respectful, welcoming, accessible, and free of discrimination and/or harassment.
4. This document shall be made available on the website and provide a copy in an accessible format upon request.

Application

This policy applies to all persons that are employed or otherwise formally associated with SMH, AND are authorized by SMH to deliver services to the public on its behalf.

Questions about the Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, the Director of Risk Management and Quality Improvement.

Policy Statement

1. People with disabilities will have equal opportunity to obtain, use, and benefit from all services (and goods associated with services: e.g. medicine) offered to the public by SMH.
2. Services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
3. All individuals covered by this policy will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability, and individual needs. This may include:
 - Interpretive services
 - Sign language
 - Communication board
 - Mobility aids

4. Services provided by SMH to people with disabilities will be integrated as fully as possible into existing service delivery procedures, and will allow people with disabilities to benefit from the same services as other people, delivered in a similar way.
5. People with disabilities have the right to use their own personal assistive devices while accessing the services provided by SMH, unless there is a defined risk associated with that use. The designated SMH healthcare provider of the person with disability will communicate any anticipated risk before the onset of expected service delivery, and alternative measures will be explored as necessary.
6. People with disabilities may be accompanied by their Service Animal while in those areas of SMH that are normally open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law (e.g. food preparation areas) or public health concern. The designated SMH healthcare provider of the person with disability will communicate any anticipated exclusions or public health concerns before the onset of expected service delivery, and alternative measures will be explored as necessary.
7. People with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person have the right to access their support person while utilizing services provided by SMH, unless such access conflicts with established practices for healthcare delivery and/or privacy. The designated SMH healthcare provider of the person with disability will communicate any anticipated conflicts before the onset of expected service delivery, and alternative measures will be explored as necessary.
8. Public notice will be provided in the event of any planned or unexpected disruption to the services offered, or facilities located within, SMH, or in a manner that takes into account the needs of disabled persons.
9. All individuals covered by this policy will receive duty specific training on providing customer service to people with disabilities.
10. People with disabilities will have the option of providing feedback on the degree to which their accessibility needs were met while obtaining services from SMH. SMH will aim to resolve any accessibility deficiencies noted by this feedback process.

Associated Procedure

Customer Service Standards

1. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 4*, access to goods or services will be provided to members of the public or other third parties at premises owned or operated by SMH.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, SMH shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with them.

While SMH will strive to make all reasonable accommodations, the owner of the Service Animal is ultimately responsible for its care and supervision. SMH cannot accept liability for any Service Animal's care or well-being while its owner is accessing services at SMH.

Emergency situations where a service animal's owner can no longer care for his or her animal will be handled on a case-by-case basis. However, SMH cannot accept liability for the care or well-being of the Service Animal.

In situations where the presence of a Service Animal could seriously impact the health and/or safety of another patient/visitor at SMH, the designated Unit Director will analyse all options for safely allowing the Service Animal to stay with its owner. Some of the options to consider may be creating distance between the animal and the individual(s) affected by its presence, eliminating in-person contact, changing the time the individual and the Service Animal's owner receive service, using air purifiers, or other measures that would offer the Service Animal's owner equal opportunity to obtain service from SMH.

Where a Service Animal is excluded by law, SMH will aim to provide other measures to the person with a disability to obtain, use and benefit from the services offered.

If it is not apparent that an animal is being used for reasons relating to a person's disability, SMH staff may request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the animal is needed for reasons relating to a disability, or a certificate confirming that the animal has been trained by a professional Service Animal institution.

The Service Animal must be clean and in good health, with proof of applicable immunization available upon request.

2. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 4*, if a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, SMH shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on premises.

SMH may limit a support person's access to their charge on the basis of medical or safety considerations. For example, if a designated support person has a communicable illness and it is likely that they will put others at risk due to their illness, they may be denied access to their charge and/or to other areas of the hospital. (5)

If a person with a disability is deprived of access to their support person for this reason, SMH will assume responsibility for the basic care of the disabled individual. If possible, situations requiring the separation of the individual and support person will be discussed with the two parties in advance and measures to minimize the effect of the separation will be taken.

SMH may require the presence of a support person if it is deemed by healthcare staff that significant amount of risk is incurred by the disabled person who is attempting to access SMH service's without assistance.

SMH staff will observe established practice with respect to privacy and doctor-patient confidentiality, unless the individual receiving care consents to the support person being privy to their medical information.

3. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 5 and O. Reg. 191/11, s. 13*, notification about planned disruptions will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and instructions on accessing alternative facilities or services, if available.

SMH will endeavour to provide notice either directly to clients and/or through posted signage at the site of the disruption as well as other conspicuous locations within SMH (to be posted by Security), and/or through updates on the SMH internal and external websites, as required. For unexpected disruptions, SMH will follow the above procedure on a “best efforts” basis.

4. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 6 and O. Reg. 191/11, s.7*, several methods will be used when providing training including an information guide/booklet, an online training course sourced from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, and in-service education as appropriate to job roles and functions.

Training will include:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of 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 a service animal or a support person;
- How to access an in-house resource on how to use the equipment or devices available at SMH that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities, e.g. bell relay, accessible washrooms, ASL interpretation; and
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing SMH’s services.
- SMH’s policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

The training will be disseminated as follows:

- Packaged training presentation for managers to deliver to their teams;
- E-learning module;
- In-person training session offered by a facilitator from Risk Management; and
- A customized training session arranged by the unit manager with a facilitator from Risk Management with the same content as the previous item.

These methods may be supplemented with a customer service booklet to use for ongoing reference. After initial roll-out, training will be provided to new staff at orientation. All third party contractors and volunteers will receive the SMH Customer Service booklet prior to commencement of their engagement at SMH.

The training will be recorded as follows:

- Completion of the online training course will be recorded through the LMS.
 - Attendance at orientation will be recorded through Leadership & Staff Development.
 - Volunteer training will be recorded through Volunteer Services.
 - Individual managers will record attendance at training offered through staff meetings.
 - Physicians will receive training via electronic presentation and their participation will be recorded through the Office of the Chief Medical Officer.
5. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 6*, Hospital staff will have knowledge of the assistive devices available at the Hospital and/or have access to staff members with knowledge regarding the appropriate use of the device. Assistive devices include, but are not limited to, mobility and lifting devices, as well as communication aids such as TTY phones, etc.
6. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 7*, SMH has implemented a process to receive feedback on the provision of services provided by SMH to people with disabilities. The SMH Patient Relations office will work with clients to determine a process for responding to feedback and will coordinate a response from the health care team. Any staff receiving comments/feedback may refer people to Patient Affairs.

The Patient Relations Staff are committed to maintaining confidentiality and responding to feedback in a timely way. With advance notice, in-person meetings can be arranged with translation services and sign language interpreters as needed.

The process for responding to feedback on how SMH provides goods and services to people with disabilities is as follows:

Patients

1. The feedback will be received by a member of the patient's health care team;
2. The member of the health care team will respond;
3. If the concerns require further attention, the person will contact the Patient Relations office at extension 5215; and
4. The concern will be managed via the standard process used for patient concerns.

Visitors

1. Visitors will address their concerns through the Patient Affairs office at extension 5215.

Employees/Contractors/Third Party agents

2. The feedback will be received by the supervisor of the area; and
3. If the concerns require further attention, the person will contact the designated Director for the area. Further assistance may be obtained by contacting the Risk Management office at extension 6038.

See Patient brochure

http://smhinet.smh.toronto.on.ca/Intranet/pdf/patient_ed/materials/patient-affairs.pdf

7. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 8*, SMH shall notify persons whom it provides goods or services that documents required by this Regulation are accessible on the SMH external website.
8. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 429/07, s. 9*, SMH shall provide the information contained this document to a person with a disability in an accessible format upon request.

General Integrated Standards

9. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4*, SMH shall establish, implement, and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan document. The accessibility plan will outline how St. Michael's will achieve accessibility through the integrated standards.

SMH shall prepare an annual status report, and shall be made available on the website and provide a copy in an accessible format upon request. The SMH Accessibility Plan (See Appendix A) shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years by the Accessibility Action Committee, beginning in 2013.

SMH shall notify persons whom it provides goods or services that the Accessibility Plan required by this Regulation is accessible on the SMH external website.

SMH shall provide the information contained the Accessibility Plan to a person with a disability in an accessible format upon request.

10. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 191/11, s. 5*, SMH will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, except where it is not practical to do so.
11. Pursuant to *O. Reg. 191/11, s. 6*, SMH will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring self-serve kiosks, except where it is not practical to do so.

Definitions

Accessible Format: A format that may include, but not limited to, large print, recorded audio, and electronic format, Braille, and other formats used by persons with disabilities (*AODA, 2005.*)

Assistive Devices: Devices used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by this standard. Assistive devices include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, reading machines, recording machines, hearing devices and devices for grasping, canes (*AODA, 2005.*)

Barrier: 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 informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice

Disability according to the *AODA (2005)*:

- 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,
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Note: Disabilities can be visible as well as non-visible; of different severity, the effects of a disability may come and go.

For Example:

- A person with arthritis has a disability that over time may increase in severity.
- A person with a brain injury has a disability that is not visible.
- A person with multiple sclerosis has a disability that causes her to experience periods when the condition does not have an effect on her daily routine and other periods when it does.

Service Animals: An animal who accompanies a person with a disability as they are used by the person for reasons relating to their disability. Service animals may accompany people with physical (sight, hearing), cognitive or seizure-related disabilities, among others.

In most cases it will be obvious that an animal is being used for reasons relating to a person's disability. If it is not apparent, the person will usually have a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the animal is needed for reasons relating to a disability, or a certificate confirming that the animal has been trained by a professional service animal institution. Service animals should not be confused with "pet therapy" animals, which are used to provide comfort and motivation.

Support Persons: An individual who accompanies a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. The support person could be a paid personal support worker, a volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications (*AODA, 2005*).

Revision Number	Contact
00	Director, Risk Management and Quality Improvement
01	Director, Risk Management and Quality Improvement

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