
Title: Accessible Customer Service

Document Number:
ADM-1-005

BACKGROUND

Purpose and Application

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the “AODA”) is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” came into force on January 1, 2008. That Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties. This policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer, student on placement, or otherwise and all persons who participate in developing the hospitals policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of care to members of the public or other third parties.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and addresses the following:

- The provision of services to persons with disabilities;
- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

DEFINITIONS

Accessible means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, or entered; obtainable.

Disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical 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 impairment, 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 disorder,
- d) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

A **Barrier** is 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, and attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

POLICY

Chatham-Kent Health Alliance (CKHA) is committed to advancing compassionate, quality care that is accessible to all persons that we serve.

The Provision of Services to Persons with Disabilities

CKHA will use reasonable efforts to ensure its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- CKHA services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- The provision of CKHA services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services; and
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from CKHA services.

Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

Persons with disabilities are welcomed to bring their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from CKHA services. Exceptions may occur in situations where CKHA has determined the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. In these situations and others, CKHA may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from CKHA services, where CKHA has such other measures available. It should be noted it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Service Animals

Service animals of persons with disability are welcomed by CKHA. If a service animal is excluded by law, CKHA will ensure alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from CKHA services. If it is not readily apparent the animal is a service animal, CKHA staff may ask the person with a disability to provide a licensed identification card in the case of trained service dogs or a letter from a physician or nurse confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability. It should be noted it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his or her service animal is kept in his or her care and control at all times.

Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, CKHA will ensure both persons are welcomed to enter any facility, and the person with a disability is encouraged to be present if this is the wish of the patient. CKHA may request a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others in the facility.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

CKHA is aware the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions of services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within its control or

knowledge. CKHA will make reasonable effort to provide 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.

CKHA will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, CKHA will provide notice as soon as possible. When temporary disruptions occur to CKHA's services or facilities, notice will be made conspicuous and may be displayed at the location of the disruption, at all facility entrances or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible. In the event of a temporary disruption in service the following steps will be taken by the Support Services Assistant:

- i. Verbal notice depicting information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available will be given to;
 - a. Registration,
 - b. Volunteers at the Lobby Information Desk
 - c. Security and
 - d. Any departments directly effected by the disruption.

- ii. Written notice will be given via e-mail to the above mentioned departments and posted at all entrances, at the site of the disruption and on the intranet depicting information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

- iii. Verbal notice of the end of the disruption will be given to;
 - a. Registration
 - b. Volunteers
 - c. Security and
 - d. Any departments directly effected by the disruption

- iv. Written notice of the end of the disruption will be distributed via e-mail to the above mentioned departments. The posted notices at the site of the disruption, at the entrances and on the intranet will also be removed as soon as practicably possible.

Training

CKHA will ensure all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. Every person who deals with members of the public or who participates in developing the organization's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to the public including organization staff, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who provide service on behalf of the organization, will receive training regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

The content of the training will include:

- i. The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act,
- ii. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities,

- iii. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, or require the assistance of a service animal or support person,
- iv. How to use equipment made available by the organization to help people with disabilities to access goods and services,
- v. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the organization's goods and services.

Timeline for Training

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the hospital's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Records of Training

CKHA will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

Feedback

Chatham-Kent Health Alliance is committed to providing high quality care to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements. Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of care to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public.

Please refer to Administrative Resource Manual Policy 7-030, Responding to Patient and Family Complaints.

Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

CKHA will provide the public notice of the availability of the documents, required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, (O. Reg 429/07) upon request. Notice of availability will be provided on the website and through other printed methods. CKHA is required, by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, CKHA will take into account the persons ability to access the information and will provide the document or information contained in the document in a format that meets those needs as agreed upon with the person. When documents are requested the following steps will be taken:

- i. Determine with the person requesting the document what format would best meet their needs.
- ii. Contact the Communications Department with information on what document the patient has requested, what format would best suit the patients needs, and how to contact the patient.

REFERENCES

1. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service