
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Multi-Year Accessibility
Plan 2014 - 2018

Director of Administration
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Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) to make Ontario accessible by 2025. This act (AODA) establishes standards related to accessibility that applies to both the public and private sector. The standards are intended to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. The Act stresses the primary principles of dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity in the review, development and implementation of all standards.

The *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* became law in January 2009. This regulation established accessibility standards relating to customer service. On July 1, 2011, the province of Ontario released the *Integrated Accessibility standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*. The *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* includes general requirements such as policy development, planning and training with compliancy dates phased in between 2012 and 2025. Standards are required in the areas that affect people with disabilities including information and communications, employment, procurement, training, self-service kiosks, building accessibility, transportation and general service policies and procedures. The development of a multi-year plan to meet the standards is a key component of the regulations.

OUR COMMITMENT

Hastings Prince Edward Counties Health Unit is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The 2014 – 2018 accessibility plan outlines the actions that Hastings Prince Edward Counties Health Unit will implement to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. Accomplishments during 2012 and 2013 have also been indicated in the plan to provide a point of reference for all accessibility achievements and progress. For purposes of compliance dates, the health unit is an autonomous health unit and regarded as a non-profit organization.

SECTION ONE : ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Historically, Hastings Prince Edward Counties Health Unit has always strived to provide goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to service and allowing customers with disabilities to access our goods and services in a similar way as other customers.

Activity	Progress to Date	Responsibility
Establishment of AODA Working Committee	A small working committee of the Human Resources Manager and three Program Managers was established to review and meet the requirements of the AODA legislation.	Senior Management
Accessible Customer Service Policy	<p>An <i>Accessible Client Service Policy</i> was completed and distributed to all staff in September of 2013.</p> <p>This policy includes a general commitment statement and outlines the following procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Use of service animals, support persons and assistive devices • Accessibility of meetings • Notice of Temporary Disruptions • Accessibility of health unit documents • Feedback Process • Roles and Responsibilities for accessible service • Training on client service • Evaluation of policy <p>The policy is posted on the health unit website.</p>	AODA Working Committee
Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement	An <i>Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement</i> was completed in December 2013 which provides a one page summary of the <i>Customer Service Policy</i> . This summary was posted at all work locations.	Human Resources
Notice of Temporary Disruption Policy	A <i>Service Disruption Notice</i> policy was also completed in September 2013. This policy outlines the specific procedures involved in communicating a service disruption. A sample service disruption notice is available for staff use.	AODA Working Committee

Activity	Progress to Date	Responsibility
Request for Accessible Service Policy	A new <i>Request for Accessible Service Policy</i> was completed in September 2013 which specifies how clients can make requests for service accommodation requirements.	AODA Working Committee
Development of Request for Accessible Service Form	A new <i>Request for Accessible Service</i> form is available on the website to meet the requirements of this policy.	AODA Working Committee
Development of Customer Feedback Form	An <i>Accessibility Feedback Form</i> is posted on the website to provide an opportunity for clients to give feedback.	AODA Working Committee
Training of all staff in customer service regulations.	A comprehensive training about AODA and customer service regulations was completed at the all-staff day in June 2012.	Human Resources / AODA Consultant
AODA Resources and References Sheets	As part of the training held in 2012, an assortment of resources is available for staff reference including the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive devices • Making Buildings & Spaces Accessible • Checklist for Making Buildings & Spaces Accessible • Planning An Accessible Meeting • Checklist for Planning an Accessible Meeting • Service Animal Tips • Support Person Tips • Tips for Communicating with People with Disabilities 	Human Resources/AODA Consultant
Information and Communications	The health unit website was changed effective July 2013 to provide the ability for text size changes and to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0, level A. Website also redesigned to include information on AODA including general statement and links to policies, request for accessible service form, request for alternative format publications and feedback form.	IT Department
Request for Alternative Format Publications	A <i>Request for Alternative Format Publications</i> policy was developed in Sept 2013 to provide a procedure for client requests for alternative publication formats.	AODA Working Committee
Request for Alternative Format Publications Form	A <i>Request for Alternative Format Publications</i> form is posted on the website for clients to request alternative formats for our resources.	AODA Working Committee

Activity	Progress to Date	Responsibility
Employment Standard	<p>A new <i>Accommodation of Employees with Disabilities</i> policy was distributed in September 2013. This policy outlines policies and procedures associated with developing individualized workplace accommodation and emergency response plans for employees who have a disability. The policy is also applicable to applicants seeking employment with the health unit who need accommodation.</p> <p>All job postings were changed to include wording to welcome applicants with disabilities and how to make arrangements for accommodation in the recruitment process.</p>	Human Resources
General Statement of Commitment	<p>A <i>Statement of Organizational Commitment</i> policy was created to provide a framework within which accessibility plans and initiatives will be implemented within the organization and to outline how the health unit will comply with the Integrated Accessibility Standards.</p>	Director of Administration/AODA Working Committee

Continue to review and revise corporate policies and procedures and program standards to ensure high quality, accessible customer service.	All Management	Ongoing
Consult with key stakeholders and advisory groups on emerging or changing requirements.	Program Management	Ongoing
Review customer feedback and take appropriate action.	Program Management	Ongoing
Continue to implement service disruption protocols; this will be increasingly important in 2014/2015 during Madoc location closure and Belleville relocations.	Director of Administration	Ongoing

INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATIONS

General Requirements:

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations requires organizations to meet employment, information and communications and transportation standards over the period of 2012 – 2021 as outlined in the regulations. The following workplan builds on accomplishments up to 2014 and provides initiatives to support compliance with the Accessibility Standards and ultimately enhance accessibility in the areas of information and communications and employment. Transportation standards are not applicable to the health unit. General requirements refer to activities that are not specific to the information and communications or employment standards.

Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Provide staff training in Accessibility policies and multi-year plan	AODA Working Committee	October 2014
Review Implementation and accessibility features of Self-service kiosks for new building (Currently not using Self-service kiosks)	AODA Working Committee with input from IT Department and Program Staff	April 2015
Conduct an accessibility self-audit/assessment after relocation to new building in Belleville	AODA Working Committee	June 2015
Conduct an accessibility self-audit/assessment of branch offices in Bancroft, Trenton and Picton.	AODA Working Committee	August 2015
Include accessibility in decision making for potential relocation in Prince Edward County branch office.	Director of Health Protection	June 2015
Review accessibility in contracting of community sites for flu clinics	Director of Health Protection	June 2015
Implement findings of accessibility self-audit/assessments	AODA Working Committee	2016-2018
Continue staff training process as required to ensure staff are familiar with accessibility policies & procedures; review methodology of training process; evaluate and make revisions as required.	AODA Working Committee	2016-2018

Employment Standards Requirements:

The employment standard was developed to ensure that organizations provide accessibility for persons with disabilities throughout the employment life cycle including recruitment, selection, hiring, retention and performance assessment. This standard will have an impact on how organizations interact with, and accommodate, employees with disabilities. Hastings Prince Edward Counties Health Unit has a good accommodation program in place for employees however more work is planned to increase accessibility.

Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Provide human rights training to staff.	HR Consultant	February 2014
Strengthen and clarify documentation process for employee accommodation.	Human Resources	December 2014
Develop employee return to work policy.	Human Resources	December 2014
Review and revise emergency response plans for new building including individualized emergency plans.	Human Resources/Transition Team/Building Operations	February 2015
Review performance management, career development and redeployment policies and procedures to include accessibility considerations.	Human Resources	2016
Conduct an assessment/audit of all human resources practices in order to identify barriers, make changes and increase potential employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.	AODA Working Committee	2017
Establish new policies, procedures and practices resulting from human resources audit process.	AODA Working Committee/Human Resources	2017

Information and Communications Standards Requirements:

The main goal of the Information and Communications Standard is to promote inclusive design of information and communication platforms and to specify requirements to prevent and remove barriers to persons with disabilities when creating, distributing, receiving and, in some instances, procuring information and communication systems and technology. The basic objective is to improve accessibility in our communications with customers, employees, vendors and the public.

Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Ensure that wayfinding of new building and emergency procedure plan is clear and in an accessible format.	AODA Working Committee/Transition Team	January 2015
Continue to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities.	Program Managers/AODA Working Committee	Ongoing
Revise website to standardize language, include visuals and simplify navigation and formats whenever possible.	AODA Working Committee/IT Department	2015
Review/audit resources on website to determine if accessible formats are available via links to other public resources; prepare recommendations for conversion of key documents.	AODA Working Committee	2015
Develop workplan to ensure internet website and content conforms with WCAG 2.0 level AA .	AODA Working Committee/IT Department	2017
Develop additional policies, procedures and practices to improve accessibility in communications.	AODA Working Committee	Ongoing
Monitor customer feedback process and implement changes as required.	AODA Working Committee	Ongoing

SUMMARY

Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of our community. This Accessibility Plan reports on the accomplishments up to December 2013 and outlines the actions planned for 2014 and future years.

For more information on any aspect of the Accessibility Plan, please contact the Director of Administration at:

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