

Policy Title: Accessibility: Persons with Disabilities	Policy Owner: Accessibility Advisory Team	
	Approval By: CEO	
	Effective Date September 2009	Revision Date March 2019
Key Words: Disability, equal access, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, (AODA), accommodation, service animals, integrated standard, assistive devices		

Annual review and posting to internal and external website is required.

POLICY

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive environment to individuals with disabilities by preventing, identifying and removing barriers that impede the ability of people with disabilities to access care and services consistent with the principles of understanding, acceptance, respect and inclusivity.

Under the Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and applicable regulations, STEGH promotes an accessible environment for people with disabilities; monitored through the Accessibility Advisory Team. The following standards are applicable to STEGH: Customer Service, General Requirements, Employment, Information and Communication. This policy applies to staff, physicians, midwives, volunteers and affiliates of the organization. This policy applies to STEGH activities occurring on premises or off-site.

Responsibilities

Employees, Physicians, Midwives, Volunteers and Affiliates:

- Participate in required education related to the Accessibility Standards
- Forward feedback from patients/customers regarding the Accessibility Standards to the manager of the appropriate area
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy
- Regarding Service Animals:
 - Notify the manager of any allergies, religious exceptions or fears of animals and assist in finding an alternative healthcare provider who is willing to switch to provide care to the patient with the service animal
 - Only ask for documentation where it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal
 - Do not separate a patient from their service animal without consent
 - Do not pet, touch, play, feed or interact with the service animal
 - Do not feed, walk, exercise, clean or provide any other care for the service animal

Executive Team:

- Review of existing policies and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)
- Ensure STEGH practices are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity,
- integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities

Managers and Supervisors:

- Implement, monitor and evaluate compliance of Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)
- Develop most appropriate accommodation for person with disability in consultation with Human Resources, Occupational Health and the patient/hospital team member.

For the most up-to-date version of this policy, please refer to the on line Policy Manual found within STEGHNET. Hard copy versions of this policy cannot be verified as being accurate.

- Develop and maintain individualized workplace emergency plans for employees with disabilities, consult with HR or OHSW as necessary
- Ensure staff know alternative service access available should accessibility be temporarily out of service (i.e.) elevator down
- Ensure staff know accessibility standards as it relates to service animals which may require the healthcare team to:
 - Notify other patients, family or visitors of a service animal's presence and address any concerns including allergies, religious belief and/or fear. Document in the patient chart any alternative arrangements that are necessary.
 - Discuss with the patient/owner, healthcare providers and employees the responsibilities for service animals and arrange for available supports to assist, if required
 - Discuss with the family or visitors accompanied by a service animal the responsibilities for feeding, handling and cleaning issues while on site.

Human Resources services:

- Identify training needs related to AODA and ensure all records of training are maintained
- Review policies and procedures related to Accessibility Standards
- Ensure HR practices are consistent with Accessibility Standards

Accessibility Advisory Team:

- Is responsible for guiding and directing the activities related to accessibility
- Set priorities and develop strategies to address barrier removal and prevention
- Ensure that all requirements of the AODA are fulfilled
- Report, as required by legislation, the implementation of Accessibility Standards to the Ontario Government
- Update the annual accessibility plan

Patients/Clients/Hospital Team Members:

- Self-identify if there is a disability for which they require assistance in accessing STEGH services and communicate such to the appropriate STEGH personnel

PROCEDURE

STEGH will ensure we are identifying and removing barriers to access for people with disabilities by supporting the following:

1. Use of Service Animals

- Service animals can play an important and necessary role in fostering the independence of some people with disabilities and enable them to access supports.
- A trained service animal, under the control of the person with a disability, will be welcomed by STEGH and its staff.
- Service animals are often recognizable as they are wearing a harness or a service vest that alerts the public to the fact that they are working.
- Any animal posing a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or exhibiting repeated disruptive behaviour, may be denied access to STEGH. In this case, staff will ensure other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain services.
- This is not to be confused with Pet Therapy or Pet Visitations see: CCC Policy REC 4.50 Pet Therapy/Visitation and or speak to the manager of the area.

- In accordance with the Health Protection and Promotion Act, service animals are not permitted in:
 - Food preparation and public food service areas
 - Medication storage/preparation areas
 - Infection Control will assess the risk for patient care and decide if service animals will be permitted in;
 - Isolation rooms
 - Intensive Care Unit
 - Procedure areas (operating rooms, labour/delivery, pre/post op recovery)
 - In a room with an immunosuppressed patient
 - Safety: if any person sustains an injury from a service animal, a safety report must be completed using RMPPro. All bites must be reported to Southwestern Public Health at 1-800-922-0096
2. Use of Assistive Devices and Support Persons
- STEGH will make every effort to ensure persons with disabilities can use their assistive devices when accessing care and services.
 - STEGH will permit persons with disabilities to be accompanied by support persons on STEGH premises, except where this is a safety concern.
3. Notice of Temporary Disruptions
- In the event services are temporarily unavailable, or anticipated to be, STEGH will provide public notice.
 - Notice – Disruption in Service is attached for use to post on external website and in locations near the disruption.
4. Training for Accessibility
- Mandatory training will be provided to every staff member and affiliate related to accessibility, customer service and service animals.
 - A record of training including names and dates will be maintained.
5. Feedback
- Opportunity for feedback is established through email, telephone, event management system, or in person.
6. Accessibility Plan
- In compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards, the Accessibility Advisory Team will consult with stakeholders and produce a multi-year plan that
 - includes measures to identify and remove barriers to persons with disabilities
 - includes a list of policies, programs, practices to be reviewed in upcoming years to identify barriers
 - is updated and reviewed and posted annually on the external/internal website.
7. Notice of Availability of Documents
- Provide public notice that the documents required by the Accessibility Standards are available upon request in accessible formats.
8. Reporting
- Maintain policies and procedures to demonstrate compliance with the Accessibility standards.

- Submit an annual accessibility report, including an accessibility plan as per the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001), to the executive team.
 - File an accessibility report with the Ontario Government as required.
9. Workplace Emergency Response Information
- Provide emergency procedures and public safety information to members of the public in accessible formats, upon request.
 - Provide individualized emergency response information to employees who self-identify as having disabilities. Emergency evacuation plans for employees with disabilities will be shared with their manager, security and peer assistants if noted.
10. Transportation
- Where applicable, STEGH will provide accessibility transportation services upon request.
11. Procuring or acquiring goods and services
- STEGH incorporates accessibility criteria when procuring, acquiring, or designing goods and services.
12. Internet and Web Content
- As of 2014, all NEW internet websites and web content conforms to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), 2.0, Level A (excluding live captioning and pre-recorded audio description).
13. Recruitment
- Staff and public are notified about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in recruitment process
 - Upon selection, applicants are notified that accommodations are available upon request
14. Accommodation
- Staff are informed of policies to support employees with disabilities, including provision of job accommodation
 - Individual accommodation plans are created for employees with disabilities
 - Return to work plans are created for those who have been absent from work due to a disability
 - Accessibility needs and accommodation plans are taken into account when redeploying employees with disabilities.
15. Performance Management and Career Development
- Accessibility needs of staff with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, will be considered during performance management process and when providing career development and advancement to staff with disabilities.

Accessibility Services/Accommodation available at STEGH

Printed Floor Plan & Signage

- Printed Floor Plan on each floor posted at elevator
- Signage being replaced to meet accessibility standards for clarity

Escorts

- Volunteers available to escort (Mon-Fri 0800-1600); phone 2167

Directory Signs

- Inside Main Entrance Doors (East), First Floor, and South Building

Accessible Entrances

- East entrance and South Building is accessible at ground level without curbing
- Equipped with automatic, sliding doors

Accessible Parking

- Designated spaces in lots for visitors, patients, and staff

Accessible Washrooms

- Accessible washroom marked with this symbol:



Accessible Elevators

- Accessible and equipped with audio tones and Braille

Handrails/bumpers

- In main hallways throughout hospital

Wheelchairs

- Available in Emergency, East Entrance and South Building

Care of the Bariatric Patient

- Bariatric beds, lifts, stretchers, commodes, wheelchairs
- See policies & procedures for care of the bariatric patient

Assistive Devices

- Members of the public are encouraged to use their own personal assistive devices to access services. This may include service animals.

Phones and Teletypewriter (TTY) Text Phone Devices

- Permanent TTY device at Switchboard location in Emergency Department.
- User phone # STEGH TTY Line (519) 631-7789

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters

- Available upon request – advanced notice is required
- Contact the Canadian Hearing Society, reference: Accessibility: Interpreter/Translation and Alternate Format Procedure

Language Translation Services

- Available through phone translation services – reference: Accessibility: Interpreter/Translation and Alternate Format Procedure

DEFINITIONS

Accessibility: Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. Ontario has laws to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), and the [Ontario Building Code](#).

Accommodations: are measures used to make something accessible to an individual with a disability. Provision of assistive devices or services, changes to policies, programs or procedures, allowing a person with a disability to participate, even though they may participate differently, are some examples of accommodations.

Adaptive or Assistive Devices: includes tools such as computers or special communication devices that facilitate access to information or services for people with disabilities, as well as devices/supports such as mobility aids, service animals, etc.

AODA: The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) seeks to ensure that all Ontarians have fair and equitable access to programs and services and to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Act addresses barriers in Customer Service; Information and Communication; Employment; Transportation; the Design of Public Spaces

Barrier: A barrier is a circumstance or obstacle that keeps people apart. For people with disabilities, barriers can take many forms including attitudinal, communication, physical, policy, programmatic, social, and transportation.

Disability: is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses or activities as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission:

- 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 of 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 *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997.

Equality: means not only treating people the same way but also may mean treating people differently in order to ensure that they have access to information and services equal to persons without disabilities.

IASR: The AODA has five Standards which are included in the Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR). These include the Customer Service Standard; Employment Standard; Information and Communication Standard; Design of Public Spaces Standard; the Transportation Standard; as well as some general requirements.

Support Persons: are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities. Some people rely on support persons for certain services or assistance, such as using the washroom or facilitating communication.

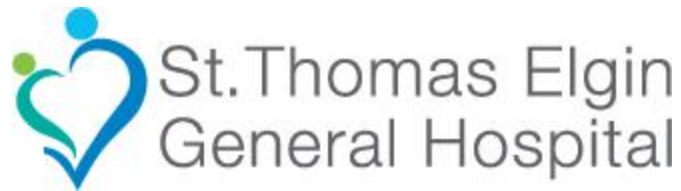
REFERENCES

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07
Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11
Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001)
Guide: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care - Assistive Devices Program
Web Content Accessibility Guideline Overview (WCAG)
[Accessibility Standard for Employment – Providing Emergency Response Information](#)
STEGH Recruitment & Selection Policy
STEGH Care of the Bariatric patient Policy
STEGH Accessibility: Interpreter/Translation and Alternate Format Policy

APPENDICES

[Template for signage](#) for posting if access is temporarily out of service (disruption of service template)

This policy & procedure replaces Accessibility Customer Service Policy, Accessibility Customer Service Procedure, and Accessibility Service Animals.



Notice

Disruption in Service

There is currently an unexpected service disruption. The estimated time of the service disruption will be:

From: _____

To: _____

The disruption includes:

The following alternative services are available:

On the behalf of the St. Thomas Elgin General we would like to thank you for your patience in this matter.

Contact: _____

Upon removal of this sign – please forward to Human Resources