

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY TEAM



Policy Title:	Accessibility Supports for Persons with Disabilities	
Policy Owner:	Accessibility Advisory Team	
Approval By:	Vice President, People Services & Strategy	
Version #:		
Original Effective Date: September 2009		Reviewed/Revised Date: March 2026
Key Words: Accessibility, disability, equal access, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, (AODA), translation, interpreter, language, interpreter, translator, deaf, Canadian Hearing Society, sign language, language and sensory barriers, developmental disability, physical barriers, handicap, accommodation, service animals, integrated standard, assistive devices, medical remote interpretation		

POLICY STATEMENT

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) is committed to supporting a culture that values promoting a positive and safe environment for the hospital community that is reflective of the hospital's organizational values. STEGH is committed to providing accessible customer service and integration to individuals with disabilities, consistent with the principles of understanding, acceptance, and inclusion.

Under the Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), STEGH continues to promote an accessible environment for people with disabilities; monitored through the STEGH Accessibility Advisory Team. This policy sets out compliance with the Customer Services Regulation and the Integrated Accessibilities Standards, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 and Ontario Regulation 191/11. This policy applies to anyone entering the Hospital.

DEFINITIONS

Accommodations: 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.

Disability:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness,
- 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.

Equity: 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.

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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Managers:

- Implements, monitors and evaluates compliance of Accessibility Standards
- Receive requests for accommodation from persons with disabilities
- Determine, in consultation with the patient//hospital team member, the most appropriate accommodations
- Ensure staff know accessibility standards and are aware of procedure for back up accommodation or to notify patients/clients/staff should accessibility be temporarily out of service (i.e.) elevator down.

Human Resources services:

- Identify training needs, related to accessibility, and ensures all records of training/ attendance sheets are in Human Resources for record keeping
- Review policies and procedures related to Accessibility Standards
- Ensure HR practices are consistent with Accessibility Standards

Accessibility Advisory Team:

- Report, as required by legislation, the implementation of Accessibility Standards to the Ontario government
- Update the accessibility plan

Physicians, Employees, 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

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

e).1 Service Animals

- e).2 Service animals can play an important and necessary role in fostering the independence of some people with disabilities and enable them to access supports.
- e).3 A trained service animal, under the control of the person with a disability, will be welcomed at the Hospital.
- e).4 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.
- e).5 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.
- e).6 This is not to be confused with pet therapy or pet visitations for in-patients. Speak to the manager of the clinical area.
- e).7 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
- e).8 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
- e).9 If any person sustains an injury from a service animal, an incident report must be completed using the incident reporting system. All bites must be reported to Southwestern Public Health.

e).1 Use of Assistive Devices and Support Persons

- e).2 STEGH will make every effort to ensure persons with disabilities can use their assistive devices when accessing care and services.
- e).3 STEGH will permit persons with disabilities to be accompanied by support persons on STEGH premises, except where this is a safety concern
- e).4 Accessibility services and accommodations can be found on Appendix A.

e).1 Notice of Temporary Disruptions

- e).2 In the event services are temporarily unavailable, or anticipated to be, STEGH will provide public notice.
- e).3 'Notice – Disruption in Service' Appendix B

e).1 Training for Accessibility

- e).2 As part of corporate orientation, training will be provided to every staff or affiliate related to accessibility and human rights
- e).3 A record of training including names and dates will be maintained.

e).1 Feedback

- e).2 Opportunity for feedback and response is established through email, telephone, incident reporting system, or in person.

e).1 Accessibility Plan

- e).2 In compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), 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. This will include a list of policies, programs, and practices to be reviewed annually and posted on the external/internal website.

e).1 Notice of Availability of Documents

- e).2 Provide public notice that the documents required by the Accessibility Standards are available upon request in accessible formats.

e).1 Reporting

- e).2 Maintain policies and procedures to demonstrate compliance with the Accessibility standards.
- e).3 File an accessibility report as required with the Ontario Government.

e).1 Workplace Emergency Response Information

- e).2 Provide emergency procedures and public safety information to members of the public in accessible formats, upon request.
- e).3 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.

e).1 Transportation

- e).2 Where applicable, STEGH will provide accessibility transportation services upon request.

e).1 Procuring or acquiring goods and services

- e).2 STEGH incorporates accessibility criteria when procuring, acquiring, or designing goods and services.

e).1 Internet and Web Content

- e).2 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).

e).1 Recruitment

- e).2 Staff and public are notified about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in recruitment process
- e).3 Upon selection, applicants are notified that accommodations are available upon request

e).1 Accommodation

- Staff are informed of policies to support employees with disabilities, including provision of job accommodation
- e).2 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

- e).3 Accessibility needs and accommodation plans are taken into account when redeploying employees with disabilities.
- e).1 Performance Management and Career Development**
- e).2 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.
- e).1 Interpreter / Translation**
- e).2 Members of the public may use their own interpreter support service, which may include having a person accompany them or use interpreter/translation services provided by STEGH.
- e).3 STEGH offers All Languages Limited, a real-time medical interpretation service in over 235 languages, including ASL. Professional interpreters are available within 30 seconds, providing 24/7 over-the-phone support. Video support is available for 20+ high-volume languages, including 24/7 ASL and Spanish. More information can be found in Appendix D.

REFERENCES

[Accessibility in Ontario](#)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) [Ontario Building Code](#)

Recruitment & Selection Policy

Workplace Accommodation Policy

Code of Conduct Policy

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Accessibility services and supports available at STEGH

APPENDIX B – Notice – Disruption in Service

APPENDIX C - Guide for assisting people with disabilities and/or special needs

APPENDIX D - All Languages Ltd: Video and Phone Language List

APPENDIX E - Additional supports for people with disabilities