



## Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA): Customer Service Standard

PURPOSE	
This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer services for the organization, in accordance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Customer Service Standard.	
OBJECTIVES	
Outline the areas that the DRHC is responsible for in relation to AODA:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Telephone services</li> <li>• Assistive devices</li> <li>• Use of registered service animals</li> <li>• Support Persons</li> <li>• Notice of temporary disruption</li> <li>• Training of staff</li> <li>• Emergency Procedures</li> <li>• Documentation and feedback</li> <li>• Modifications to this and other policies</li> <li>• Notice of availability of documents</li> <li>• Format of documents</li> <li>• Questions</li> </ul>	
SCOPE	
This policy applies to all DRHC employees, physicians, volunteers, contractors, and affiliates of the organization.	
RELATED DOCUMENTATION	
<p>Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List documents here that might be related to this policy</li> </ul>	<p>External</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List documents here that might be related to this policy i.e. legislation, law etc.</li> </ul>
DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS	
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Assessable formats	Refers to formats that are alternatives to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities, such as large print, Braille, DVDs, and audio formats.
Communication supports	Refers to methods that assist communication and access to information for people with disabilities. Examples include plain language formats, sign language, reading out loud, captioning, or using written notes to communicate.
Disability	As defined under the <i>Ontario Human Rights Code</i> is:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 in a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;</li> <li>• A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;</li> <li>• A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;</li> <li>• A mental disorder,</li> <li>• An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the <i>Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</i>.</li> </ul>
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**ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

<p>Managers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure employees work in compliance with policies and procedures</li> </ul> <p>Senior Leadership Team/Human Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide AODA education on orientation and every 2-yr on Surge Learning as part of Mandatory Education</li> <li>• Ensure the Human Resources AODA resources are update to date and available for staff requiring support.</li> </ul> <p>Director Risk, Safety, Service Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, amend, and implement the policy as required.</li> <li>• Report to Service Ontario as required</li> <li>• Chair the AODA committee and update the AODA workplace bi-annually.</li> </ul> <p>Employees, volunteers, contractors, affiliates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in mandatory AODA training as provided by the organization</li> <li>• Follow all procedures as set out in this policy.</li> </ul>
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**PROCEDURE**

<p>Dryden Regional Health Centre is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:</p> <p><b><u>Communication</u></b></p> <p>DRHC is committed to making company information and feedback processes accessible to people with disabilities. To achieve this:</p>
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- Information will be made available in accessible formats, on request. Alternative formats are available at no additional cost and will be provided in a timely manner.
- Managers will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.
- DRHC encourages staff to determine the most appropriate accessible format or communication support, given the needs of the person making the request and the company’s ability to deliver.
- If the information cannot be converted, managers will explain why the DRHC is unable to do so and provide a summary of the content.

DRHC will train employees who communicate with clients on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

**Telephone Services**

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers.

We will offer to communicate with customers by alternate format if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available

**Billing**

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: large print, e-mail, or verbal communication. We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

**Assistive Devices**

DRHC is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from its services. DRHC’s employees who deal directly with patients, families, and visitors are trained and familiar with various assistive devices used by clients with disabilities while accessing our services. Devices may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, personal sound amplification devices. DRHC will make reasonable efforts to ensure that assistive devices can be used to access services.

**Use of Registered Service Animals**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

When a patient, family member or visitor enters the hospital with a service animal every effort will be made to accommodate and ensure that the surroundings will allow the individual to effectively maintain their relationship with the animal. If this is not possible due to health or safety concerns, a mutually agreed upon location for the animal may be identified for a limited time. In this instance, other provisions will be made to ensure that the individual receives the assistance that the service animal otherwise provides

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**Support Persons**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have the support person present while on the premises unless it becomes a health or safety risk. In this instance, other provisions will be made to ensure that the individual receives the support otherwise provided by the support person. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek the consent of the person with the disability prior to discussing confidential information in front of the support person.

**Notice of Temporary Disruption**

DRHC will provide notice to patients, families, contractors, affiliates, and visitors with disabilities in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or office facilities. Where possible, DRHC will post a notification on the website and at all public entrances and service counters on its premises.

The notice will include the following items:

- Information about the disruption
- The reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- Description of alternative facilities or services, if available
- Contact information

While DRHC cannot provide the same guarantee in emergency temporary disruption situations, every reasonable effort will be made to give adequate notice.

In the case of an unscheduled disruption, the notice will be placed at all public entrances, customer service counters and at the location of the service disruption as soon as practically possible.

In the case of a scheduled disruption, DRHC will post the Notice prior to the disruption, at the physical location, on the website and if appropriate will advertise the disruption with local media outlets. The Notice will be posted to allow for sufficient time to inform patients, families, and visitors.

All employees will be advised via e-mail of the temporary disruption of services.

Patients may also be contacted by phone prior to an appointment to advise them of the change/disruption and alternatives.

**Documentation and Feedback Process**

The goal of DRHC is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way DRHC provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by letter, verbally, by email, or feedback card.

The process for feedback:

- All feedback will be directed to the Director, Patient and Public Relations.
- Clients can expect a response within 3 business days.

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- Complaints will be addressed according to practices as established in the DRHC complaint management procedures.

The feedback process is promoted on the website, through internal patient satisfaction surveys and the brochure, "Your Opinion Matters to Us".

**Emergency Response Procedures**

DRHC will provide, upon request, all existing emergency procedures, plans and public safety information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, in a timely manner, on request.

**Modifications to this or Other Policies**

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of DRHC that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

**Notice of Availability of Documents**

Dryden Regional Health Centre will provide 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 web site and through the brochure 'Your Opinion Matters to Us'

**Format of Documents**

The Dryden Regional Health Centre shall upon request give a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person. DRHC will consider 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.

**Questions About this Policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence for clients with disabilities. The Director Risk, Health, Service Quality will be responsible for answering any questions about the policy or explaining the purpose if it is not understood.

Contact information:

Katherine Campbell

Director Risk, Health, Service Quality

[kcampbell@drhc.on.ca](mailto:kcampbell@drhc.on.ca)

(807)216-0080/ (807) 223-8201 ext. 2268

**COMMUNICATION**

- AODA policies can be located internally on the OMNI document management system
- AODA policies can be located externally on the DRHC website



- All staff will be required to review this policy every 2-years

**TRAINING**

All employees, volunteers, physicians, and others who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of DRHC will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Training will be provided to each person according to his or her needs and duties. Training for new employees will be provided during the general orientation before commencement of duties. A record of the dates on which training is provided and the individuals to whom it is provided will be kept.

Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices, and procedures. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis to reflect changes made to our policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

Training will include:

- The purposes 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 use the equipment or devices available (eg TTY) that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing DRHC services.
- DRHC policies, procedures and practices relating to the customer service standard.

**EVALUATION**

Policy reviewed every 2-years.

**REFERENCE MATERIALS**

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Customer Service Standard.

IF APPLICABLE – APPROVED BY COMMITTEE I.E. BOARD OF DIRECTORS, JOHSC ETC.

Approved by DRHC AODA Committee – 24 May 2022

**ENDORSED BY**

DRHC Ethics Committee