

POLICY

Accessibility

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Policy

Statement of Commitment

Grand River Hospital (GRH) 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 (AODA)*.

General

All people have the equal right of access to all GRH goods, services and facilities in a manner that promotes the dignity, autonomy respect, privacy, integration and safety of persons with disabilities.

This policy applies to all GRH Representatives and any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of GRH in accordance with the legislation.

Through the multi-year accessibility plan, GRH will outline the policies and actions that the organization will put into place to improve opportunities to ensure equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of GRH services, programs, goods and facilities.

A copy of this policy and the [multi-year accessibility plan](#), as written, or in an accessible format, will be made available to the public on request and will be posted on the GRH website.

Definitions

Accessible Formats: May include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and video and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Barrier: 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, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Disability:

- 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 service 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 in 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 insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).

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GRH Representative(s): All persons employed or contracted by GRH facilities as well as members of the GRH Professional Staff and GRH Volunteer Association.

Guide Dog: Guide dog is defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* and means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulation.

Kiosk: is an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

Service Animals: Working animals that have special training to assist a person to overcome barriers.

Support Person: In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods and services.

Procedure

A. Customer Service Regulation Standards

Assistive Devices

Personal assistive devices are used by people with disabilities. They include a broad range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, portable communication boards, and electronic communication devices.

GRH will ensure that appropriate staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by patients, family members and visitors with disabilities to obtain use or benefit from our services. In the case where telephone communication is required and is not suitable, staff may communicate with patients, family members and visitors by other methods (e-mail, TTY telecommunication, written notes, or in person).

Notice of Service Disruption

GRH will provide patients, family members and visitors with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities (i.e. elevators, access ramps, handicap parking, TTY phones, handicap washrooms etc.). This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Information pertaining to the disruption will be posted at the location using a standard format and a recorded message added to the service disruption information voicemail box – extension 5655. Information will be posted on the GRH website as soon as practical during regular business hours (i.e. Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).

Use of Support Persons

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is welcome to enter GRH premises with his or her support person. Any situation that would require the separation of individual and support person (e.g. medical procedures) will be discussed with the individual in advance, appropriate measures taken and documented in the patient's record.

In the event that GRH organizes or hosts an event charging an admission fee, advertisement and communications for the event will clearly state that support persons are welcome and that any necessary arrangements should be made on an individual basis with the event organizers in advance of the event.

Use of Service Animals

GRH will ensure that persons with a disability who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal are permitted to enter the facility with the service animal and to keep the animal with him/her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law (where food is being prepared). They are not considered pets. Any situation that would require the separation of individual and her/his service animal (e.g. surgical procedure) will be discussed with the individual in advance, appropriate measures taken and documented in the patient's record.

For reasons of infection prevention and control the service animal must remain with her/his owner at all times. Interaction with others is discouraged. In the event that a service animal and/or owner enters an isolation room or is unable to comply with infection control measures, Infection Prevention and Control must be consulted regarding any

special precautions or requirements.

It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to keep the animal in his/her care and control at all times.

GRH has the right to request that a patient, family member or visitors provide proof that the animal is a service animal required for his/her disability. This proof should be in the form of a letter signed by a physician or nurse. The letter only needs to verify the need of a service animal for this person, and is not required to outline the person's disability or purpose of the animal.

B. Integrated Accessibility Regulation Standards - General Standards

Education

All GRH Representatives and others who deal with the public at GRH will complete mandatory education. Education will be in the format of an online interactive course using the Learning Management System (Professional Staff members will receive the education through an alternate format). All new GRH Representatives will complete this education as part of their orientation. The content of training material will include:

- a. The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the requirements of the customer service standard and the integrated accessibility standard;
- b. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- c. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- d. How to access equipment and information available at the hospital that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities;
- e. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing GRH goods and services; and
- f. GRH policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service and integrated accessibility standards and the Human Rights Code.

GRH Representatives will also receive education on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

C. Integrated Accessibility Regulation Standards - Information and Communication Standards

Feedback

Feedback regarding the way GRH provides services to people with disabilities can be made verbally, through e-mail, via the "send us your feedback" link on the GRH website home page or in writing. All feedback will be directed to the Patient Relations Advisor and follow up will be provided. All complaints will be entered in Risk Monitor Pro and quarterly reports will be reviewed and provided to the Senior Leadership Team.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Except as otherwise provided by the *AODA*, the hospital shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in accordance with the schedule set out in the *AODA* Integrated Standards Regulation. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner. Based on consultation with the requestor, GRH will take into account the person's accessibility needs and provide the communications at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. The public will be notified that communications are available in accessible formats through GRH communications and the GRH website. To submit a request for communications in an accessible format, contact the communications department by phone at 519-749-4300, ext. 2788 or by email at info@grhosp.on.ca.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by GRH or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product shall conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the *AODA* Integrated Accessibility Standards.

Accessible Emergency Information

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GRH is committed to providing patients, family members and visitors with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

Kiosks

GRH will consider the needs of people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

D. Integrated Accessibility Regulation Standards - Employment Standards

GRH is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Recruitment

GRH will post information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. Successful applicants will be notified about the hospital's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment.

Employee Supports

GRH will inform employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

Upon an employee's request, Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness will consult with the employee to assist in identifying accessible formats and communication supports for: a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

If an employee's disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary and GRH is aware of the need for accommodation, this information will be provided to employees.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans will be developed for employees with disabilities.

Return to Work Process

GRH will have in place a documented return to work process for employees returning to work due to disability and requiring disability-related accommodations.

Performance Management

GRH will include accessibility considerations in performance management processes.

Career Development and Advancement

GRH will include accessibility considerations and individual accommodation plans in career development and advancement, including additional responsibilities within current position.

Redeployment

GRH will include accessibility considerations and individual accommodation plans in redeployment processes.

E. Integrated Accessibility Regulation Standards – Built Environment Standards

The requirements outlined below are effective as of January 1, 2016.

Exterior Spaces – Exterior Paths of Travel

GRH will ensure that any exterior path of travel constructed or developed that it intends to maintain, meet the requirements set out in Ontario Regulation 413/12 of the *AODA*. [Click here to access the technical requirements for exterior paths of travel spaces.](#)

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Accessible Parking

GRH will ensure that when constructing new or redeveloping off-street parking facilities that it intends to maintain, these off-street parking facilities must meet the requirements set out in Ontario Regulation 413/12 of the AODA. [Click here to access the technical requirements for accessible parking.](#)

Obtaining Services – Service Counters

GRH will ensure when constructing new service counters, which includes replacing existing service counters, that the following requirements are met:

- There must be at a minimum one service counter that accommodates a mobility aid for each type of service and the accessible service counter must be clearly identified with signage, where there are multiple queuing lines and services counters.
- Each service counter must accommodate a mobility aid, where a single queuing line serves a single or multiple counters.

GRH will ensure the service counter that accommodates mobility aids will meet the following requirements:

- The countertop height must be such that it is useable by a person seated in a mobility aid.
- There must be sufficient knee clearance for a person seated in a mobility aid where a forward approach to the counter is required.
- The floor spaced in front of the counter must be sufficiently clear so as to accommodate a mobility aid.

Obtaining Services – Fixed Queuing Guides

GRH will ensure when constructing new fixed queuing guides, that the following requirements are met:

- The fixed queuing guides must provide sufficient width to allow for the passage of mobility aids and mobility assistive devices.
- The fixed queuing guides must have sufficiently clear floor areas to permit mobility aides to turn where queuing lines change directions.
- The fixed queuing guides must be cane detectable

Obtaining Services – Waiting Areas

GRH will ensure that when constructing a new waiting area or redeveloping an existing waiting area, where the seating is fixed to the floor, a minimum of three per cent of the new seating must be accessible, but in no case shall there be fewer than one accessible seating space. Accessible seating is a space in the seating area(s) where an individual using a mobility aid can wait.

Maintenance

In addition to the accessibility plan requirements, GRH will ensure that their multi-year accessibility plans includes the following:

- Procedures for preventative maintenance and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces required under this Part.
- Procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this Part are not in working order.

Related Documents

[Interpretation Services Policy \(ADM-A-1050\)](#)

[Pets in Hospital Policy \(CLN-P-75\)](#)

GRH Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - January 1, 2014 - December 31, 2018

References

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Integrated Accessibility Standards Ontario Regulation 191/11

Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19

Blind Persons' Rights Act 1990

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