

	<h1>Policy & Procedure</h1>	Section Accessibility	Number 29-001
Accessibility Policy	Original Effective Date December 2009	Review/Revised Date(s) Nov. 2010, Jan. 2011, Mar. 23/12, Jan. 31/13, August 2014	
	Next Review Date: August 2017		
	Authorization: Director of Corporate Affairs	 Signature:	

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline practices and procedures in place at South Huron Hospital Association (SHHA; the Hospital) to help identify and remove barriers that impede a person's ability to access care and services.

Policy

SHHA is committed to excellence in serving all customers, including people with disabilities, and will carry out functions and responsibilities in the following areas as required under Bill 103, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). It is the policy of SHHA to strive, at all times, to provide goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. SHHA is also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services, allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers. In order to do so, SHHA will address the specific needs of all persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

SHHA will establish policies, practices and procedures on eliminating barriers and providing services and supports to people with disabilities. These are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

SHHA will maintain and develop policies on how the Hospital will meet its requirements under the AODA and will provide such policies in an accessible format upon request.

Documentation that describes this policy and each of its requirements will be maintained on the Hospital website and provided to individuals upon request in the appropriate format or with communication support.

SHHA will produce a multi-year Accessibility Plan, in consultation with persons with disabilities. The plan will be posted on the Hospital's website and shall be made available in an accessible

format and with communication supports, upon request. Progress on the plan will be provided on the schedule determined by the AODA legislation.

When procuring goods, services, or facilities, SHHA will incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the Hospital shall provide an explanation, upon request

Departments Affected

All SHHA employees, volunteers and any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the Hospital in accordance with the legislation.

Definitions

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, 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, 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 remedial appliance or device.
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a development 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.

Service Animal: An animal described in subsection 4(9) of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

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.

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

Communication Supports may include but are not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Procedure

1. Customer Service Standard

1.1 Communication

SHHA will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

SHHA will train all employees and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities (see Appendix A-E Support Strategies for People with Various Disabilities).

Telephone services

SHHA is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. SHHA will train employees and volunteers to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

The Hospital will offer to communicate with customers by email if communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Billing

SHHA is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, the Hospital will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of SHHA 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 SHHA provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by:

- In writing attention to: SHHA Accessibility Coordinator
- By email to: shha.accessibility@shha.on.ca
- By Phone: 519-235-2700 ext. 0 and asking for the SHHA Accessibility Coordinator or delegate
- In Person: by asking for the SHHA Accessibility Coordinator or delegate
- Or by using other methods as agreed upon between the individual and the hospital.

All feedback will be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator. Customers can expect to hear back in within 30 days from receipt of request.

Complaints will be addressed according the Hospital's Patient Relation Process policy (see policy 01-030).

1.2 Assistance

Assistive devices

SHHA is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. The Hospital will ensure that staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services (for example: wheelchairs, patient overhead lifts, walkers, etc).

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

SHHA is 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. The Hospital will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal (please refer to policy 29-002).

SHHA is 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 enter the Hospital premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on the premises (please refer to policy 29-003).

1.3 Notice of Temporary Disruption

SHHA will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises (please refer to policy 29-004).

2. Information and Communication

2.1 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, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons (please refer to policy 29-005).

2.2 Emergency Procedures, Plans and Information

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

3. Employment Standards

3.1 Workplace Emergency Response Information

If an employee's disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary and the Hospital is aware of the need for accommodation, this information shall be provided to employees. In addition, this information will be provided, with the employee's consent, to the person designated to provide assistance. The information will undergo review when the employee moves to a different location, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when TOH reviews its general emergency response plan.

3.2 Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans shall be developed for employees with disabilities. If requested, these plans shall include information regarding accessible formats and communications supports. If requested, the plans shall include individualized workplace emergency response information.

4. Transportation Standards

Not applicable.

5. Built Environment

The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment focus on removing barriers in two areas:

1. Buildings
2. Public spaces

As of January 1, 2015, new construction and renovations will be subject to updated accessibility requirements.

Training for Staff

SHHA will provide training to all employees, affiliates, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of accessibility policies, practices and procedures. Training will occur during the employee's, affiliates or volunteer's orientation process upon initial hire.

Training will include the following:

- 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 wheelchairs, patient lifts, and all other assistive devices that are relevant to the employee's area of work.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Hospital's goods and services.
- Hospital policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Modifications to this or other policies

SHHA is committed to developing accessibility 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 the Hospital that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions about this or other accessibility policies

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about this or other policies as it relates to accessibility, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by, or referred to, the SHHA Accessibility Coordinator 519-235-2700 ext. 0 or shha.accessibility@shha.on.ca.

All policies and procedure documents related to Accessibility are available to the public upon request in a format agreed upon by the person with a disability.

All documentation related to Accessibility will be posted on the internet and can be accessed through the Hospital website at www.shha.on.ca. Please follow the feedback process if you require paper copies or larger font sizes of documents.

Related Documents

Patient Relation Process policy - 01-030
Language and Translation Resource List – 04-072
Service Animals – 29-002
Support Persons – 29-003
Disruption of Hospital Services – 29-004
Language and Translation Resource List – 29-005

Support Strategies for Communicating with Seniors (Advice, Techniques, Tips) – Appendix A
Support Strategies for People with Blindness or Visual Impairment – Appendix B
Support Strategies for Cerebral Palsy – Appendix C
Support Strategies for People with Intellectual Disabilities – Appendix D
Support Strategies for People with Mental Illness – Appendix E

References

The Ottawa Hospital Accessibility Policy, December 17, 2012
Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ont. Reg. 191-11)
Bill 103, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005 (AODA)