



Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care 2006-2007 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

Introduction for 2006-2007 Accessibility Plans

In June 2005, the Ontario government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) into law.

The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

The first two standards that are currently being developed cover the areas of transportation and customer service. On June 13,

the first anniversary of the passage of the AODA, the government announced the development of three new standards that will address information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period during which government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. These plans must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will mean real and effective change.

This document is the fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-2006 plan and outlines the commitments for 2006-2007 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

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Message from the Minister



This year marks the first anniversary of the landmark *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) – legislation that will foster the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

The Act legislates that the provincial government work with both the disability community and with private and public sectors, to develop standards achievable in five-year stages. The intent is to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025. We are determined to deliver on that goal by building on past achievements and laying a foundation for standards that will bring about effective change in the lives of people with disabilities.

We must lead by example in becoming an inclusive employer and service provider in accessible locations.

I am pleased to say that we are successfully eliminating barriers, improving accessibility and working together within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders in key areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

During the past year, we have built on the success of our previous three plans and are continuing to look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities. For example, we have created and posted a series of captioned video clips in American Sign Language (ASL) on such subjects as influenza, pandemic flu and the West Nile virus. These clips provide information on the diseases and explain what the health system is doing to protect the public. We will continue to produce and post ASL videos. As well, we have incorporated a text-only display on public websites, with adjustable fonts and colour controls. I am pleased to note that the feedback we have received on these improvements has been extremely positive.

These and other accessibility achievements described in this year's plan, as well as our continued commitment to further

improvements, demonstrate our efforts to help make Ontario communities strong, vital, and accessible for people of all abilities.

I want to thank ministry staff for helping to make this happen and I wish them every continued success in this important work.

George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care



Report on Achievements

2005 – 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was successful in achieving planned commitments outlined in its 2005-2006 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Commitment :
The ministry will promote greater awareness and understanding of disability issues and ministry guidelines.

Status :
Completed.

Action :
All managers were directed to complete the online accessibility awareness training module.

Timeframe :
Training was provided as new managers were hired.

Commitment :
The ministry will review and update its Accessibility Plan every year in consultation with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Status :
Completed.

Action :
The ministry prepared and electronically posted its annual Accessibility Plan on the ministry's corporate website.

Timeframe :
The plan was posted in fall of 2005

Commitment :
Practices must be in place in partnership with Publications Ontario for the coordination of publications in accessible alternate formats.

Status :
Ongoing

Action :

The ministry created and posted on its corporate website a series of captioned video clips in American Sign Language (ASL) on influenza, pandemic flu, and the West Nile virus. The short video clips provide general information on these diseases and explain what the health system is doing to protect us.

The font size of type in publications targeted at seniors is routinely set in 13-point type. The TTY number is actively promoted in all media and publications.

Timeframe :

New ASL video clips will be made available on the corporate website as they become available.

Commitment :

The ministry is committed to updating its corporate French website to make it consistent with the ODA standards.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The update of the entire corporate French website was completed to make it ODA compliant, consistent with WC3 WAI standards.

Timeframe :

The French and English websites continue to be updated on a regular basis.

Commitment :

The ministry will provide procurement staff with relevant accessibility resources that have been developed to assist with the implementation of the procurement guidelines.

Status :

Completed.

Action :

The ministry installed the ODA Guidelines, templates and a short on-line video clip on its intranet as tools for ministry management. Procurement training took place and a portion of the training was dedicated to ODA. The additional tools were posted on the ministry's intranet, and related training took place during regularly scheduled consulting services contract management training.

Timeframe :

The tools were posted in November 2005. Training took place in December 2005 and January 2006.

Commitment :

The Accessibility Working Group will meet regularly to review the Accessibility Plan, identify future training needs for all staff members and discuss achievements and progress on ODA compliance. The ministry will continue to provide current and future managers and supervisors with online ODA accessibility awareness training.

Status :

Completed.

Action :

The ministry directed all managers to complete ODA online training; explored options to have accessibility awareness incorporated into staff orientation; and identified accessibility considerations for Information and Information Technology.

Timeframe :

The Working Group consulted with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario on the annual accessibility planning process.

Commitment :

The ministry will continue to use specifications it has developed for furniture, seating and furniture accessories in accordance with ergonomic standards that are suitable for use by people with disabilities. These include height-adjustable keyboards.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

All furniture purchases were made through the Vendor of Record (VOR) using its pre-set selection. As furniture, seating and furniture accessories were purchased, the specifications developed by the ministry were taken into consideration.

Timeframe :

The ministry will continue to update the furniture and chairs Vendors of Record as new ergonomic features become available.

Commitment :

The Provincial Psychiatric Hospitals (PPHs) will continue to systematically monitor current research and hospital standards to identify, prevent, assess and remove barriers.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

All furniture and equipment purchased for clients and employees met accessibility standards. The PPHs continue to buy furnishings and equipment that enhance patient health and help eliminate and/or minimize barriers.

Timeframe :

The psychiatric hospitals continue to review and monitor the process.

Commitment :

The ministry has developed and implemented procedures to monitor compliance with all acts and regulations and to identify necessary site modifications based on code requirements, accessibility needs and obligations and issues that have the potential to expose the ministry to liability.

Government standards for barrier-free design will continue to be applied: when the ministry purchases or builds new government-owned facilities (buildings, structures and premises); when the ministry significantly renovates existing government-owned facilities; and when the ministry enters into a new lease for facilities for its use.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The ministry continues to work with Ontario Realty Corporation and SNC Lavalin ProFac to ensure updates to code compliance are reviewed, facilities are assessed and corrective action is taken.

Timeframe :

This action is being incorporated in each new renovation project as needed.

Commitment :

The ministry has established a Strategic Accommodation Planning Group (SAPG) to address employee accommodation and employee and public accessibility issues during large-scale renovation and accommodation projects in existing buildings and new premises. The group will continue to ensure all large-scale projects comply with ODA and Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities, issued in October 2004.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

Accommodation and accessibility issues were addressed as they arose.

Timeframe :

The ministry will continue to ensure that facility projects are executed in compliance with the standards.

Commitment :

Members of the ministry's human-resources staff will receive employee accommodation training to ensure they are knowledgeable about ODA requirements.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

Employee accommodation training will continue to be provided as new staff is hired.

Timeframe :

The training program is conducted throughout the year.

Commitment :

Bargaining agents will contribute to the ministry's ODA plan.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The Ministry Employee Relations Committee and the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario (AMAPCEO) Ministry Employee Relations Committee discussed the 2005-2006 plan and.

Timeframe :

Bargaining agents will provide input into future Accessibility Plans.

Commitment :

The ministry will conduct a review of employment advertisements to identify any systemic barriers for people with disabilities. The results of this review will be used to address and remove any identified barriers in future accessibility planning.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The ministry realigned with the work of the Human Resources Transformation Project to review systemic barriers associated with job advertisements.

Timeframe :

The ministry will continue to review all advertisements for barriers to persons with disabilities.

Commitment :

The ministry will continue to provide employment accommodation, consistent with government direction. It will also provide modified return-to-work arrangements for employees with disabilities.

Status :

Ongoing

Action :

The ministry will continue to accommodate the accessibility needs of its employees in accordance with the Human Rights Code to the extent that these needs relate to their employment.

Timeframe :

Special accommodation needs are processed as they arise.

Commitment :

The ministry will consider and identify any possible impact the ODA may have on its recruitment and service-delivery processes. It will remove any identified barriers that may affect applicants and employees with disabilities.

Status :

Ongoing

Action :

The ministry continues to remove any identified barriers that may affect applicants and employees with disabilities.

Timeframe :

Recruitment and service-delivery processes are reviewed on a continual basis.

Commitment :

The ministry will continue to make accessibility mandatory in all new lease searches for acquisition of new space where the lease is greater than 30 months, as per Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities, issued in October

2004.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The ministry has revised its leasing criteria to make accessibility mandatory for all lease searches, including site and building, transportation routes and adjacent facilities. The ministry also reviewed existing sites to determine compliance with ODA standards.

The ministry and its agencies acquired 167,928 rentable square feet of space in 20 different buildings. This included major renovations, and all accessibility standards were incorporated into the fit-up of the space.

Timeframe :

ODA standards will continue to be taken into consideration as new space is acquired.

Commitment :

The ministry will ensure that new and redeveloped long-term care (LTC) homes meet the standards specified in the ministry Long-Term Care Facility Design Manual (1999) and the Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities, issued in October 2004.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

Construction plans for six new and 16 redeveloped LTC homes were reviewed to ensure they met these standards. Upon completion of construction, all LTC homes were inspected to ensure these standards were met.

Timeframe :

Timelines are determined based on LTC home construction schedules.

Commitment :

The ministry will continue to make its regional offices more accessible to anyone who uses a wheelchair, by building ramps, locating offices on ground floors, and installing door operators and lower counters at camera stations, for example.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The ministry was able to relocate seven OHIP sites either to the first floor of the building or have them included as part of [ServiceOntario](#). These locations include 808 Robertson Street, Kenora; 110 Laurier Avenue, Ottawa; and 400 City Hall Square East, Windsor.

The ministry continues to comply with the legislative requirements in all facility/accommodation initiatives, such as the accelerated renovation project at the OHIP customer-service entry and interview room doors in Sault Ste. Marie, and the *ServiceOntario* co-locations in Peterborough and Sarnia.

Timeframe :

As new facility/accommodation initiatives arise in the regional offices, the ministry will make them more accessible.

Rationale :

There has been an organizational restructuring which will affect the regional offices; therefore, no changes have been made to certain locations.

Commitment :

The ministry will ensure accessibility for people with disabilities at public venues for health-related meetings and events.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The ministry continues to ensure public, health-related meetings and event venues are accessible to people with disabilities.

Timeframe :

Accessibility is considered whenever public meetings are scheduled.

Commitment :

The ministry, in partnership with local Joint Health and Safety Committees, will deal with any issues relating to compliance and any requests for accommodation to meet accessibility needs in ministry facilities, in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The ministry continues to make accessibility mandatory in all new lease searches for acquisition of new space where the lease is greater than 30 months. The ministry continues to work with the local Joint Health and Safety Committees across the province to identify and assess issues as they arise.

Timeframe :

This process will be ongoing for existing leased sites.

Commitment :

The ministry will install permanent seating and a telephone for people who need assistance during an emergency in the designated waiting area.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

The Macdonald-Cartier Building in Kingston is being fitted with permanent bench seating near the lobby telephones on each floor.

Timeframe :

The ministry is currently working on installing 'waiting stations' on each floor of the Macdonald-Cartier Building in Kingston.

Rationale :

Project was delayed due to changes in the scope of work.

Commitment :

The ministry will continue to ensure that all transfer partners proposing or undertaking a capital project will be notified of their responsibility to comply with all applicable codes and requirements.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

This was done through the ministry's publicly accessible Capital Planning Manual and in standard ministry correspondence to facilities undertaking capital projects.

Timeframe :

This will continue through 2006-2007 as existing capital projects progress through design and implementation and as the ministry approves new project proposals. Specific timelines associated with a health-care-facility capital project are treated individually, based on a particular facility's construction schedule.

Commitment :

The ministry will continue to require that any of its transfer partners, such as a hospital, proposing or undertaking a capital project such as a renovation, is notified of its responsibility to comply with all applicable codes and requirements.

Status :

Ongoing

Action :

Through the ministry's publicly accessible Capital Planning Manual, and regular correspondence, boards/owners of health-care facilities were notified that they are responsible for ensuring that each capital project meets ODA guidelines.

Timeframe :

Health-care transfer partners are notified as new projects arise.

Commitment :

Program areas will continue to be invited on a yearly basis to identify appropriate amendments to acts or regulations.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

Legal counsel and ministry staff reviewed acts and regulations on a case-by-case basis, as they were developed or revised, to identify and address accessibility issues. A process was developed to ensure that all reviews were consistent with the ODA. No accessibility issues were identified in government legislation during 2005-2006.

Timeframe :

This continues as acts and regulations are being developed or revised.

Commitment :

During the year, the ministry identified a new commitment regarding future guide-dog access to OHIP offices.

Status :

Completed.

Action :

The ministry developed a new policy and parameters that allows guide-dogs-in-training to enter OHIP offices with their able-bodied trainers . The policy was put into place in October 2005.

Timeframe :

This commitment was identified in 2005 and completed in the same year.

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Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was successful in achieving its commitments described in its [2005 – 2006 Accessibility Plan](#). This section provides a status report of the ongoing improvement initiatives.

Commitment :

The ministry will provide people with disabilities the opportunity to gain skills and experience in an office environment.

Status :

Ongoing.

Action :

In partnership with a Kingston school placement program for people with disabilities, the ministry provides opportunities for two to three students to participate in the workplace on a weekly basis.

Timeframe :

Throughout the school year, from September to June.

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Commitments – Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming year, the ministry commits to assess its acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

- The ministry will continue to provide alternative communication systems, with a focus on TTYs to facilitate access to information by clients who are hearing-impaired or speech-impaired.
- The ministry will continue, on an as request basis, to exempt people with disabilities from attending OHIP offices in person for health card renewal.

Employment

- The ministry will continue to ensure there are no potential barriers in employment policies, processes, practices or tools for people with disabilities.
- The ministry will continue to provide accessibility training for all new managers.

Communications and information

- The ministry will work with the relevant stakeholders to review communication materials directed at the public to ensure they are accessible.
- The ministry will ensure that any future, major public education campaigns will be reviewed and the need for alternate formats assessed.
- The ministry will ensure that practices are in place in partnership with Publications Ontario for the coordination of publications in accessible alternate formats.
- The ministry will review and update its Accessibility Plan in consultation with the Accessibility Directorate.

Built environment

- The ministry will continue to make accessibility mandatory in all new lease searches.
- The ministry, in partnership with local Joint Health and Safety Committees, will deal with any issues relating to ODA compliance.
- The ministry will continue to use specifications it has developed for furniture, seating and furniture accessories in accordance with ergonomic standards that are suitable for use by people with disabilities.
- The ministry will perform self-assessment barrier analyses on five OHIP offices by March 2007.
- The ministry will conduct site audits of all potential new OHIP outreach sites to ensure access to people with a range of sensory and mobility impairments.
- The ministry will, in partnership with the Ministry of Government Services, ensure that OHIP offices locating in *ServiceOntario* Centres are designed in accordance with ODA requirements.
- Health-care transfer partners will be notified that, in planning for any capital project for their facility, issues of health, safety and accessibility are to be addressed in compliance with all applicable codes and requirements.

Acts and regulations

- Legal counsel and ministry staff will continue to consider accessibility, including the identification and removal of barriers, when reviewing existing acts or regulations or developing new acts or regulations.
- The ministry will continue to comply with the legislative requirements in all facility/accommodation initiatives.

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Commitments – Barriers to be Addressed

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care commits to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

Barrier

The results of private well water tests may be a) mailed to a person's home, b) picked up at one of the 12 laboratories located across the province, or c) accessed through an automated interactive voice response (IVR) system which is linked to the ministry's Public Health Laboratories Water Testing Information System (WTIS). A person who is hearing-impaired cannot

access the IVR system, and a person who is visually-impaired cannot access the printed copy, as the results are not available in Braille.

Commitment

The ministry is investigating the feasibility of modifying its interactive voice response system to enable hearing-impaired clients to use TTY to retrieve test results. The ministry is also investigating the expansion of the existing 'water retrieval system' website for public access. Currently, INFOLine staff access test results for the public when the caller has a rotary telephone.

Responsibility

The ministry is working with the appropriate information technology organizations to determine whether TTY service can be added to the interactive voice response system.

Timeline

Ongoing throughout 2006-2007.



For more information

Questions or comments about the ministry's Accessibility Plan are always welcome.

Please phone :

General inquiry number : 1-800-268-1154 (in Toronto, 416-314-5518)

TTY number : 1-800-387-5559

E-mail : info@mh.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address : <http://www.health.gov.on.ca>

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at : www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from :

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