

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

*2009-2010
Accessibility Plan*



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Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 sets out the roadmap to make Ontario accessible by 2025. Under this act, accessibility standards are being developed and implemented to break down barriers in key areas of everyday life.

These standards will increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

The Government of Ontario is preparing to lead the way towards an accessible province, beginning in January 2010 when the first standard — for customer service — comes into force.

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

Building on last year's plan, the 2009-10 accessibility plans will continue moving the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care towards the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The ministry is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing, and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government, and in our relationships with our stakeholders.

An executive summary of all Government of Ontario Ministry Accessibility Plans is available at:

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/ministry/accessibilityPlans/ministries_accplans10.htm.

Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. **All OPS ministries must comply with the Regulation by January 1, 2010.**

To begin to transition OPS ministries to this regulation, this section has been added to the ODA Planning Template to highlight customer service initiatives.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will adopt the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy and OPS Accessibility Guideline.

Planned Action(s): All staff will be encouraged to embed this policy into ministry-specific practices, policies and procedures to ensure that accessibility becomes part of regular business practices.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 - Mar 11

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure that persons with disabilities will be able to provide feedback on the way it provides goods or services to people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s): A process will be established within the ministry to respond and take action on complaints received in order to improve service to persons with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 - Mar 11

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to provide accessibility training for all staff to ensure they are trained, as appropriate, on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities.

Planned Action(s): All staff will be encouraged to complete the accessibility e-learning modules provided through the OPS Centre for Leadership and Learning. Training in accessible customer service will be included in staff performance management plans, and incorporated into orientation materials for new staff.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 - Mar 11

Results Achieved: Ministry staff are better able to provide goods or services to customers and clients with disabilities, and recognize the barriers people with disabilities may face when accessing services.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will provide alternative communications systems, with a focus on TTYs, to facilitate access to information by clients who are hearing-impaired or speech-impaired.

Planned Action(s): The ministry provides TTY service through a dedicated phone line at 1-800-387-5559, and promotes the TTY number on all relevant ministry web pages, fact sheets, brochures, and advertising aimed at the general public.

Implementation Timeframe: implemented (Note: ServiceOntario, Ministry of Government Services, became responsible for administering the TTY service and dedicated phone line as of July 7, 2008.)

Results Achieved: Clients are able to access services in whichever format they choose.

Report on Other Accessibility Commitments

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives to Identify, Remove or Prevent Barriers in preparation for AODA standards currently under development.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will provide training and information to ensure that managers have the necessary resources to recognize and address barriers to accessibility in the workplace and to effectively respond to workplace accommodations.

Planned Action(s): All managers have been advised of their responsibility to review the Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy to respond to accessibility issues, and to better manage the reassignment of employees to alternate positions based on medical needs.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 –Mar 11

Results Achieved: Ministry managers have the resources and knowledge they need to effectively address accommodation issues in the workplace.

Focus Area: Employment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to ensure there are no potential barriers in employment policies, processes, practices or tools for people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s): The ministry continues to remove any identified barriers that may affect job applicants and employees with disabilities. Recruitment and service delivery processes are reviewed on a continual basis to ensure they are accessible.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Family Health Teams to be reminded and encouraged to comply with accessibility requirements.

Planned Action(s): Family Health Teams will be reminded of their obligations through ministry funding agreements, Family Health Team Guides, and a facility checklist which requires them to determine the accessibility of their proposed site and identify any barriers.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Policy

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to require that healthcare facilities address their accessibility issues in accordance with existing statutes and regulations, in the design and construction of their capital projects.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will advise healthcare facility boards/owners/property management of their responsibility to comply with applicable codes (e.g. Ontario Fire Code and the Ontario Building Code), and requirements through operating agreements and as otherwise, if deemed necessary.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Program

Commitment: New

The ministry's Public Health Division (PHD) commits to ensuring that meetings, training sessions and meeting materials will be accessible, e.g. meeting spaces will be in barrier-free facilities, provision of alternative meeting modalities (e.g. teleconference, webinar, video conference, face-to-face options), and provision of materials (e.g. large print material on request, multiple electronic formats with capacity for modification for people who are visually-impaired).

An example of stakeholder training initiatives aimed at supporting accessibility is the *Hand Hygiene* program, which is designing its training packages with print and online options. Also, training models will be uploaded to the program's website to ensure that this information is accessible from the user's desired location.

Planned Action(s): PHD will develop a policy to address potential barriers when selecting meeting modalities, locations, format of materials. PHD will formalize this practice in an appropriate document, with accompanying tools and measures for consistent application across the division.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to ensure that accessibility design features and the needs of employees requiring accommodation are considered during workstation design.

Planned Action(s): The ministry will ensure that layouts for new workstations are designed in accordance with OPS Barrier Free Design Guidelines, and reflect current industry standards for ergonomic design.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Results Achieved: New and renovated ministry workplaces are accessible.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Impact: Service

Commitment: New

The ministry is creating 50 new Family Health Teams (FHTs), and 25 Nurse-Practitioner (NP)-Led Clinics across Ontario.

Planned Action(s): All 50 new FHTs and 25 NP Clinics will be accessible, and comply with the Report on Status of Customer Service Requirements, as part of the ministry's Request-for-Proposal (RFP) process for the new FHTs and NP Clinics. As well, they will be informed of their obligations for accessibility through ministry funding agreements, FHT Guides, and a facility checklist which requires them to determine the accessibility of their proposed site, identify any barriers, and describe how these barriers will be eliminated.

Implementation Timeframe: Sept 08 –Mar 10

Results Achieved: All Family Health Teams and Nurse-Practitioner-Led Clinics are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

Library services housed within the ministry's Public Health Division have undertaken several initiatives to support the accessibility of their services. This includes provision of materials online (e.g. may be modified for people who have visual impairments), the ability to send all materials directly to individual service users in their preferred method (fax, mail, online), and the support of librarians to help service users to access the collection. All of the librarians have completed accessible customer service training.

Planned Action(s): The Library continues to assess its services, and to develop new strategies to improve the accessibility of its services, through an ongoing reflective process.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry's Health System Information Management & Investment Division (HSIMI) commits to initiating compliance requirements within the division for the proposed AODA Information and Communication (IC) Standard.

Planned Action(s): HSIMI has undertaken a number of activities aimed at increasing awareness of the IC Standard development process. A group of representatives from across the ministry was initiated by HSIMI to help the ministry representative on the AODA IC standard development committee identify opportunities and challenges.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to ensure that customers and other users are aware that ministry publications are available in alternate formats.

Planned Action(s): Ministry staff will be provided with guidance on partnering with Publications Ontario to make publications available in alternate formats.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will ensure that its public-facing website complies with the Ontario government Online Design Program guidelines as well as with international accessibility standards to make information easier to access for people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s): The ministry completed phase 1 of this project in June 2009, improving navigation features and enhancing performance for accessibility. The ministry will continue with phase 2 of this project this year and with phases 3 and 4 in future years. Website content will continue to be reviewed to ensure it is accessible.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Information and Communications

Impact: Service

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will raise awareness among staff of the AODA Customer Service Standard and the other four standards currently in development.

Planned Action(s): The ministry has created an intranet website on accessibility to provide employees with the tools and resources required to comply with the AODA standards. The site will be updated on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Policy/Program

Commitment: Ongoing

The Equity Unit co-chairs the Provincial Liaison Committee for Persons with a Physical Disability, which is comprised of ministry and stakeholder organizations (both client and service provider). The committee's mandate is to provide strategic advice to the ministry about priorities for health and service delivery issues related to individuals with physical disabilities. The committee is co-chaired by the ministry, the Centre for Independent Living of Toronto (CLT), and Independent Living Service Providers (ILSP). Meetings are held in fully accessible venues, and materials are provided in formats to meet the communication needs of all members.

Planned Action(s): Ongoing committee meetings provide advice, including physical disability stakeholder perspectives, to policy and strategy development.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 – Mar 11

Results Achieved: Policy and strategy developments include perspectives from stakeholders who may be disabled.

Focus Area: Other

Impact: Act / Regulation

Commitment: Ongoing

The MOHLTC Legal Services Branch will continue to review legislation and regulations to identify barriers to accessibility.

Planned Action(s): Legal counsel will work with ministry staff, including the identification and removal of barriers, when revising existing acts or regulations, or when developing new acts or regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: Oct 09 –Mar 11

Results Achieved: 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.

For More Information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-314-5518

TTY number: 1-800-387-5559

1-800 number: 1-866-532-3161

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

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

Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/) web portal. 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:

ServiceOntario Publications

Phone: 1-800-668-9938

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