

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

*2010-2011
ODA Accessibility Plan*



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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Report on Accessibility Achievements for 2009-2010	2
Report on Accessible Customer Service Requirements	5
Information and Communication Commitments	8
Other Accessibility Commitments	11
Act(s), Regulation(s), Policy(s) being reviewed to prevent Barriers to Persons with Disabilities	14
Achievements	14
Glossary of Terms/Acronyms	16
For More Information	17

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) 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, in 2010 the government of Ontario was the first public service organization to report compliance with the first standard — Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation (Ontario Regulation 429/07).

As we await the additional standards under AODA, we are guided by the Ontario Human Rights Code and obligations set out in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA).

Each year, the government sets the course to prevent, identify and remove barriers through annual accessibility plans required under the ODA.

Building on last year's plan, the 2010-2011 accessibility plan will continue moving the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care towards the goal of an accessible province for all Ontarians.

On July 1, 2010, the ministry's Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 and accompanying regulation, O. Reg. 79/10, came into force to govern the operation of long-term care homes in Ontario. The Act requires licensees of these homes to implement a number of provisions which will ensure accessibility for their residents. Long-term care homes provide care and services to adults who are no longer able to live in the community because they require the availability of 24-hour on-site nursing care or personal support. The legislation is the cornerstone of the government's strategy to improve and strengthen care for residents in Ontario's long-term care homes. It serves as the single legislative authority for safeguarding resident rights, improving quality of care, and strengthening the accountability of long-term care homes.

To view other ministries' Accessibility Plans please visit: <http://www.Ontario.ca>.

Report on Accessibility Achievements for 2009-2010

Focus Area: Customer Service

Achievements

- Accessibility was featured in the Fall 2009 edition of the ministry's internal communications newsletter. Staff were reminded that breaking down barriers to accessibility benefits everyone.
- All staff have completed the e-learning modules on providing accessible customer service to ensure they are aware of how policies, practices and procedures will affect the way goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities. New staff are provided with accessibility training as part of their orientation.
- The ministry adopted the OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy and OPS Accessibility Guideline. Staff are encouraged to ensure that accessibility becomes part of regular business practices, by embedding the OPS policy into their program-specific practices, procedures and policies.
- The Assistive Devices Program has improved their service delivery by adding an after-hours voice-mailbox for clients inquiring about their applications for assistive devices. Clients who call Monday to Friday before 8:30am or after 5:00pm, or on weekends and holidays, may select an option to leave a message, which will be returned within one business day.
- The ministry's Consent and Capacity Board strives to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities who are required to attend hearings, by providing ASL interpretation, and video conferencing options to minimize travel. The Board holds hearings and makes decisions on the needs of people who may be incapable of consenting to treatment or who may have a mental health disability. Over 80% of applications to the Board involve a review of a person who has been committed to a psychiatric facility, or a review of a person's capacity to consent to treatment.
- The ministry's Medical Advisory Secretariat installed a dedicated TTY phone line (1-877-512-4055) in July 2010. All staff have been trained to use the device, and

advised to include the number on all documents wherever the office's general inquiry telephone number is used.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Achievements

- As part of the redesign of its public-facing website, the ministry has improved the accessibility of its high-priority web sections, such as H1N1 Flu, Health Care Options, Wait Times, Fair Drug Prices, Ontario Health Insurance Plan, Mumps, Ontario Drug Benefit Program, Telehealth, Diabetes, Hand Hygiene, Colon Cancer Check, and HPV.
- The ministry continues to provide TTY service through a dedicated phone line, maintained through its internal partner ServiceOntario, and promotes the TTY number on all relevant ministry web pages, fact sheets, brochures, and advertising aimed at the general public.
- Information for staff on how to make email attachments accessible was provided on the ministry's intranet site.

Focus Area: Built Environment

Achievements

- The relocation of various ministry offices and configuration of new workstations complied with the Guide to Barrier-free Design for Ontario Government Buildings. Improvements included the installation of automatic door openers on main entrance doors and to accessible washrooms; wider floor plans to allow more turning space for wheelchairs and scooters; lobby telephones installed at a lower height, and phone lists in larger print; as well as automatic towel and soap dispensers in some washrooms. Staff and visitors with disabilities now have barrier-free access at those locations.

- Staff are encouraged to ensure that corridors and hallways are cleared of obstacles, such as file storage boxes or carts, to allow persons with disabilities to move throughout the interior of a building safely, easily, efficiently, and comfortably. Staff will also report to facilities management whenever they encounter something in a common space which may be considered an obstruction, such as discarded furniture, or recycling bins out of place.
- The ministry released its Long-Term Care Home Design Manual, 2009 to promote innovative design in long-term care homes in Ontario. These new design standards will help service providers create positive environments that consider the diverse physical, psychological, social and cultural needs of all long-term care home residents. The goal is to support well-coordinated, interdisciplinary care for residents who have diverse needs, provided in an environment that is as comfortable as possible.

- **Focus Area: Employment**

Achievements

- The ministry ensures that all job ads include information advising the public that accommodation is available upon request to all applicants throughout the entire hiring process. Recruitment and service delivery processes are reviewed for accessibility on a continual basis.
- All managers have been made aware of the OPS Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy. Employment accommodation promotes an inclusive workplace, and a positive work environment where employees with disabilities can participate fully in all aspects of their jobs.
- The Health System Strategy Division implemented alternate work arrangements for their employees with disabilities, which allow them to work from home during severe weather conditions. Staff are provided with laptops that have VPN access to ensure their full engagement in the workplace while they are physically offsite.

Report on Accessible Customer Service Requirements

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

The OPS was the first public organization to file their compliance report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in January 2010. In order to sustain compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation, it is vital that ministries continue to look for opportunities through their accessibility planning process, to continue to embed accessibility in all areas of planning, programs and policies.

Focus Area: Customer Service

Commitment: Ongoing

Continue to monitor all comments and feedback received from the public on accessibility issues in order to make appropriate improvements to the way that goods and services are provided.

Planned Action(s):

The ministry has a process in place to collect and track feedback received through various channels, e.g. in writing, in person, via email, telephone, and ensure that appropriate action was taken.

All feedback on accessibility issues will be reviewed and analyzed to identify whether there are any trends or gaps in service for persons with disabilities.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: New**

The Provincial Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office will identify and address potential negative staff attitude and service delivery barriers within the organization which may affect the way services are provided to clients with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

Clients and stakeholders will be asked to complete satisfaction surveys to provide feedback on the accessibility of the services they received. All surveys will be reviewed and analyzed to identify any areas for improvement.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry will ensure that persons with disabilities have timely access to all documents set out in the Customer Service Regulation.

Planned Action(s):

All staff will be reminded of the tools and resources available to them whenever they receive a request for documents in alternate formats.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Focus Area: Customer Service**Commitment: New**

The Provincial Psychiatric Advocate Office will work collaboratively with psychiatric facilities to address any physical barriers that may impede client access to field offices.

Planned Action(s):

Clients will be asked to provide their feedback on the accessibility of the office location, as well as the services that are provided there. Where barriers cannot be addressed within a reasonable timeframe, alternative meeting locations and strategies will be identified to ensure equitable access to services.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Information and Communication Commitments

Information and the methods of communication are key to delivering many government programs and services to the public. It is essential that we provide the same quality and service to everyone in the province.

In anticipation of the pending standards guiding Information and Communications, the government of Ontario is continuously looking for opportunities to prevent and remove barriers to person with disabilities when creating, procuring, conveying, receiving or distributing information and communications to the public.

Focus Area: Information and Communication

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue with the redesign of its public-facing website to ensure compliance with the Ontario government's Online Design Program guidelines, as well as international accessibility standards to make information easier to access for people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

Two additional phases of the redesign project are planned to convert the remaining content on the website, and to further improve navigability and performance.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Focus Area: Information and Communication**Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry will begin preparing for compliance with the upcoming AODA accessible Information and Communications standard.

Planned Action(s):

Tools and resources will be developed and communicated to staff to assist them with understanding and implementing the new regulation, once it has been passed into law.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011**Focus Area: Information and Communication****Commitment: Ongoing**

The Health Services I&IT Cluster will promote accessibility through its delivery of I&IT solutions to all program areas within the ministry. All new computer applications and development project plans will be reviewed for accessibility.

Planned Action(s):

The Health Services I&IT Cluster will communicate to ministry staff the I&IT standards that are set by the Office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer. They will provide support and direction to all staff on their compliance with the standards, e.g. ensuring that websites are accessible, etc.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Focus Area: Information and Communication**Commitment: Ongoing**

Staff are required to incorporate accessibility considerations into the preparation of all documents to ensure that communication products are accessible to everyone.

Planned Action(s):

Direction will be provided to all staff regarding best practices when sending PDF documents and emails to ensure a greater level of accessibility. The ministry will encourage staff to view the accessibility training videos developed by the Diversity Office.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Other Accessibility Commitments

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

In anticipation of the upcoming standards the Government of Ontario has planned several corporate initiatives in the following areas, Transportation, Employment, Built Environment and others. The goal of these focus areas is to make it easier for people with disabilities to travel in Ontario, ensure accessibility for people with disabilities across all stages of the employment life cycle, and break down barriers in buildings. Many of the corporate initiatives identified for 2010-2011 aim to support ministries in their journey towards compliance with the upcoming standards.

To review a list of corporate initiatives please refer to the Ministry of Government Services 2010-2011 Accessibility Plan.

Focus Area: Other

Commitment: New

The ministry will ensure that all staff are aware of the tools and resources available to assist them with planning inclusive meetings and events with internal and external stakeholders. Invitees will be requested to advise the organizer of their accommodation needs, and every effort will be made to address them.

Planned Action(s):

Communicate to staff that successful meetings are organized in a way that supports the full and active participation of all attendees. A guide to planning successful meetings will be available for staff on the ministry's accessibility intranet site.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Built Environment**Commitment: Ongoing**

The ministry will ensure that the public and staff are advised of any disruptions in services normally used by persons with disabilities, and any alternatives that are available. Accessibility will also be incorporated into the ministry's continuity of operations and emergency planning activities.

Planned Action(s):

Staff will work with the Facilities Management Leads of their respective buildings to ensure that Notices of Service Disruption are posted in a timely manner. The notice will include the reason for the disruption, how long it will take to resolve, and alternate service delivery if appropriate.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011**Focus Area: Built Environment****Commitment: New**

The ministry will investigate the possibility of installing a roof-top emergency back-up generator for its Emergency Operations Centre.

Planned Action(s):

A back-up power source will allow staff who need to use the elevator, in order to access the offices on the upper floors at the Emergency Operations Centre, to continue working during an emergency response that may result in prolonged power outages.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Focus Area: Other

Commitment: Ongoing

Incorporate accessibility into ministry procurement practices.

Planned Action(s):

Ministry will continue to advise staff of the requirement to use the government's Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the ODA. Accessibility language has been incorporated into the ministry's Request for Proposal template and guidelines to ensure barrier-free procurement practices.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Focus Area: Other

Commitment: New

The ministry will continue to promote staff awareness of accessibility in order to create an environment of inclusiveness for people with disabilities.

Planned Action(s):

Staff will be encouraged to use the Inclusion Lens, developed by the Diversity Office, whenever reviewing and developing new policies, programs and regulations.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 - October 2011

Act(s), Regulation(s), Policy(s) being reviewed to prevent Barriers to Persons with Disabilities

In support of the commitment to remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities, the Government of Ontario will continue to review all new legislation, and policies under development to identify and remove barriers.

Achievements

On July 1, 2010, the ministry's Long-Term Care Homes Act and accompanying regulation, O. Reg. 79/10, came into force to govern the operation of long-term care homes in the province. Long-term care homes provide care and services to adults who are no longer able to live in the community because they require the availability of 24-hour on-site nursing care or personal support.

The Act and regulation were developed with accessibility issues in mind. The following are some examples of what the Act and regulation require licensees of long-term care homes to provide in order to ensure accessibility for their residents:

- Homes must be equipped with resident-staff communication and response systems that can be easily seen, accessed, and used by residents, staff, and visitors at all times;
- Mobility devices, including wheelchairs, walkers and canes, must be available at all times to residents who need them on a short-term basis;
- Strategies must be developed and implemented to meet the communication needs of residents with compromised communication and verbalization skills, or residents with cognitive impairment;
- All required information must be posted in the long-term care home in a conspicuous and easily accessible location; this information must be communicated to residents who cannot read the information; additionally some of the required information must be posted in print with a font size of at least 16;

- A pain management program must provide for communication and assessment methods for residents who are unable to communicate their pain or who are cognitively impaired;
- There must be a written plan of care for each resident which is based on interdisciplinary assessment of the resident's needs, including the resident's cognitive ability, communication abilities (including hearing and language), vision, physical functioning, and the type and level of assistance that is required relating to activities of daily living (including hygiene and grooming).

Focus Area: Other

Commitment: Ongoing

The ministry will continue to consider accessibility in the development of all new legislation and regulations, as well as in the amendment of existing statutes.

Planned Action(s):

Legal counsel will continue to work with ministry staff to identify barriers and help develop strategies to address them.

The ministry's Legal Services Branch will continue to raise awareness of accessibility issues by including information at branch staff meetings.

Implementation Timeframe: November 2010 – October 2011

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

LTC – Long-Term Care

OPS – Ontario Public Service

ODA – Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

For More Information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 416-327-4327

TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282

1-800 number: 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

E-mail: info@ontario.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 accessible province for everyone.

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

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