

# MINISTRY OF HEALTH PROMOTION

*2006-2007  
Accessibility Plan*



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# Table of Contents

|                                                         |          |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                     | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Message from the Minister</b>                        | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Report on Achievements</b>                           | <b>3</b> |
| 2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives ..... | 3        |
| <b>Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers</b>   | <b>4</b> |
| Customer service .....                                  | 4        |
| Employment .....                                        | 5        |
| Communications and information .....                    | 5        |
| Acts and regulations .....                              | 6        |
| <b>Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed</b>           | <b>7</b> |
| Customer service .....                                  | 7        |
| Built environment .....                                 | 6        |
| <b>For More Information</b>                             | <b>9</b> |

# Introduction

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

The AODA lays out a comprehensive roadmap 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 two standards currently in development cover the areas of transportation and customer service. On June 13, 2006, 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 where 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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 first-annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Health Promotion. It highlights our achievements during 2005-06 and outlines our commitments for 2006-07 — 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.

# Message from the Minister of Health Promotion



On June 29, 2005, the Government of Ontario established the Ministry of Health Promotion. The ministry is responsible for improving, coordinating and delivering programs that contribute to healthy living and wellness across the province.

Our government is committed to creating an accessible province — a province where the quality of life is enriched by the inclusion of all and our economy benefits from the contributions of everyone.

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

To commemorate this milestone, we recently announced three new accessibility standards for Ontario. They are in the areas of communications and information, the built environment and employment. These new standards are in addition to two already being developed in the areas of customer service and transportation. All public sector and broader public sector organizations in Ontario are required by law to have an annual accessibility plan and to make it available to the public.

During its first year of operation, the Ministry of Health Promotion has placed a priority on identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people through policies, programs, practices and services. We have worked across the ministry, government and with our stakeholders to better meet the needs of people with disabilities, whether they be members of the public, stakeholders or our employees.

Our accomplishments are documented in this accessibility plan. I am committed to continuing to build on our successes in making this province an accessible, inclusive province.

Sincerely,

Honourable Jim Watson,  
Minister

# **Report on Achievements**

## **2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives**

In 2006, the offices of the Ministry of Health Promotion will move to new locations at 777 Bay Street and a consolidation of our programs areas at 393 University Avenue in Toronto.

To ensure that our new offices provide accessibility for people with disabilities, the ministry established a working group composed of representatives from each of the affected areas. The working group's mandate was to provide input on a variety of issues, including layout and design of work spaces.

In compliance with government policies on workplace standards, ergonomic specialists were retained to assess current workplace configurations and advise on ergonomic equipment, such as task chairs fitted to staff so that repetitive strain injuries may be avoided.

# **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**

### **Commitment:**

The ministry will ensure that ministry organized meetings and events at public venues provide accessibility for people with disabilities. The ministry will ensure that requests concerning accessibility for people with disabilities at venues hosting public-health-related meetings and events are dealt with in a timely and cost-effective manner.

### **Commitment:**

The ministry will appoint an executive lead and maintain an Accessibility Working Group with representation from each branch of the ministry. The Accessibility Working Group will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the Ministry of Health Promotion's 2006-2007 Accessibility Plan, and reporting results. The Ministry Accessibility Working Group will meet regularly to review the Accessibility Plan to identify customer service needs and discuss achievements and progress on ODA compliance.

### **Commitment:**

The Ministry Accessibility Working Group will consult with all parts of the ministry to report on accomplishments, brainstorm, and propose actions to be taken to remove barriers through building awareness activities. These activities will support increased staff awareness of accessibility issues and knowledge of how to share best practices for the provision of services to employees, clients and stakeholders with disabilities. This will be done through group activities, staff meetings, workshops and information on Internet and Intranet websites.

**Commitment:**

Accessibility will be reflected in the ministry's planning guidelines and operational and results-based plans. Operational planning templates will contain a special note to the effect that "operational plans should reflect the ministry's commitment to continuously improve the accessibility of programs and services to people with disabilities."

**Commitment:**

The ministry will ensure that staff, stakeholders and clients are made aware that, upon request, ministry documents are available in alternate formats, e.g., Braille, large print, audio cassette and computer disk.

## **Employment**

**Commitment:**

Ministry bargaining agents will be invited to provide input into future ministry ODA accessibility plans to help identify barriers facing employees with disabilities.

**Commitment:**

The ministry will ensure new employees have the most current information on the ODA and resources. The ministry will prepare an orientation package with a strong accessibility awareness component for all new staff. In addition, the ministry will organize training for all staff.

**Commitment:**

The ministry will seek to increase accessibility in the workplace for ministry employees. The ministry's human resources department will add a clause to "Offer of Employment" letters asking employees to notify their managers if they have accessibility needs.

## **Communications and information**

The ministry will put in place processes for reviewing all proposed Internet and Intranet pages before they are posted to ensure they are accessible in accordance with the World Wide Web Consortium's web accessibility standards.

## **Built environment**

### **Commitment:**

The ministry will seek to make continuous improvements to the accessibility of its offices. For example, the ministry will make appropriate selections and alterations with respect to furniture, seating and accessories as opportunities arise.

## **Acts and regulations**

### **Commitment:**

When drafting new acts and regulations, the ministry will consider accessibility and seek to prevent barriers. (The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation Act and the Community Recreation Centres Act, and their respective regulations, were previously reviewed; no issues were identified.)

# Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed

## Customer service

**Barrier:** The ministry does not offer TTY access.

### Commitment

The ministry is: developing a process for receiving and responding to TTY inquiries; working to provide appropriate staff training in the use of TTY; working to ensure that TTY numbers are published on business cards, letterhead and the ministry website.

### Responsibility

Communications Branch

### Timeline

Spring 2007

## The Workplace

**Barrier:** The ministry's new offices at 777 Bay Street and 393 University Avenue are under construction. While the office plans were reviewed by the working group prior to the start of construction to ensure accessibility, the offices will need to be reviewed again upon completion.

### Commitment:

As part of the move of its offices to 777 Bay Street and 393 University Avenue, the ministry will seek to remove all identified barriers on the premises and ensure the offices are in compliance with the Ontario Building Code.

### Timeline

Fall 2007 and ongoing

## **Responsibility**

Business Services & Controllership Branch

# For More Information

Questions or comments about the Ministry of Health Promotion's accessibility plan are always welcome.

Please phone:

Communications Branch  
General inquiry number: 416-326-4846  
Ministry website: [www.mhp.gov.on.ca](http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca)

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

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