

PURPOSE

This policy aims at providing a welcoming experience for people with disability by providing services in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and Regulations 429/07 and Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

**SCOPE/
RESPONSIBILITY**

This policy applies to all employees, agency personnel, volunteers, student placements, contractors, consultants and board members.

Exclusions:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, O. Reg 429/07 shall not apply during any period declared as a "State of Emergency" as defined under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

DEFINITIONS

- **Alternative format:** any other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing (i.e. large print, audio format, Braille, etc.)
- **Assistive devices:** an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.)
- **Customers:** any person who receives goods or services
- **Disabilities:** the same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code:
 - 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, a 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 other remedial appliance or device;
 - A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
 - A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
 - A mental disorder, or
 - An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Approved by: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last reviewed: September 22, 2015

Issued: December 20, 2011

Replaces: N/A

Dated N/A

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- **Employee** includes but is not limited to:
 - All staff including full-time, part-time, seasonal, contract employees;
 - Volunteers including Board members;
 - Agents and contractors;
 - Any others who may interact with the public on our behalf.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- **Service Animals:** any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.
- **Support persons:** any person, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend, who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

POLICY

Community Living Hamilton is committed to providing services and practices that emphasize customer service, independence, dignity, integration and equal participation for all persons with disabilities.

This policy will be in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Regulations 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

PROCEDURES

Accessible Customer Service

Employees will:

- Provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- Give persons with disabilities an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from goods and services.

Assistive Devices

CLH welcomes and supports the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities, unless otherwise prohibited by law, to access our goods and services

When interacting with a person with a disability who may use one or more assistive devices, Employees will:

- Ensure that the person is able to enter CLH's premises with the device and to use the device to access goods or services;

Approved by: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last reviewed: September 22, 2015

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Replaces: N/A

Dated: N/A

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- Ensure that the person with the disability is aware of the assistive devices available at CLH as appropriate;
- Offer an assistive device in a manner that respects the person's dignity and independence;
- Offer assistance with an assistive device to the person with a disability in a respectable manner;
- Remove potential barriers for the use of assistive devices where possible;
- Ensure to get directions on the use of the assistive device from the person prior to assisting with the device.

Communication

CLH will:

- Provide communication regarding services, accessibility and policies in a manner that takes into account the person's disability;
- Train all CLH employees' on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Make every reasonable effort to use the means of communication requested by the customer. If the request for the communication method is not available, explain what communication methods are available and do the best to accommodate.

Receiving Feedback

In the event that there is a customer service problem, CLH will:

- Ensure that the complaint is addressed and resolved as per CLH's Complaint and Feedback policy and procedures.

Availability of Documents

CLH will ensure the following documents are available on the CLH website with a copy provided on request:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) policy, and
- Feedback and Complaints policy.

Service Animals

CLH will:

- Welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service dog on parts of the premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

Support Persons

CLH will:

- Welcome people with disabilities along with their support person to any CLH property or program that is open to the public;

Approved by: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last reviewed: September 22, 2015

Issued: December 20, 2011

Replaces: N/A

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- Obtain consent from the person with a disability prior to any confidential information being discussed in front of the support person.

Note: There will be no additional fees incurred as a result of accompaniment by a support person.

Service Disruption

In the event that there will be temporary disruption (closures, repairs, etc.), CLH will:

- Post a "Notice of Disruption of Service" which includes the following information:
 - the reason for the disruption,
 - anticipated duration,
 - alternatives to access services, and
 - contact information;
- Post the notice 2 weeks prior to a planned disruption of service;
- Post the notice as soon as possible for unexpected disruptions in service.

Training

CLH will:

- Provide training for all CLH employees on providing customer service to people with disabilities as part of the orientation process
- Ensure the training will include, Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act, 2005(AODA) and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Reporting

CLH will:

- File accessibility reports as required with the Government of Ontario.

REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) S.O. 2005
- Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19

ATTACHMENTS AND FORMS

- Notice of Service Disruption
- Concern and Complaint Form #581

Approved by: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last reviewed: September 22, 2015

Issued: December 20, 2011

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Dated: N/A

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