

POLICY TITLE: **Accessibility for Patients with Disabilities**

PURPOSE:

This policy informs staff of the Family Health Team's policy and procedures for complying with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* Customer Service Standard.

POLICY:

In fulfilling our mission, the Family Health Team strives to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to use our services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other patients.

PROCEDURE:

Providing goods and services to people with disabilities

The Family Health Team is committed to excellence in serving all patients including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

1. Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff who communicate with patients on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

2. Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our patients. We will train staff to communicate with patients in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with patients by e-mail or through a third party if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

3. Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. We will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with

various assistive devices that may be used by patients with disabilities while accessing our services.

Use of service animals and support persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

We are also committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff is properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Notice of temporary disruption

The Family Health Team will provide patients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed on our website and the staff will advise patients of any disruptions on the phone as well. In addition, the information will be prominently on site.

Training for staff

Training will be provided for the WDFHT and WDFHO employees, volunteers and others who associate with the public on our behalf. We also provide training to individuals who are involved in the development of policies, plans, practices and procedures related to the WDFHT and WDFHO.

Employees/volunteers in the following positions will be trained:

- Physician
- Medical Resident
- Students/interns
- Nurse Practitioner
- Pharmacist
- Dietitian
- Social Worker
- Registered Nurse
- Clinical Assistants and Medical Secretaries
- Administrators

Training will be provided to staff as part of their orientation process.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the elevator, wheelchair and accessible exam tables
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the WDFHT and/or WDFHO's services, including transportation options.
- The WDFHT and WDFHO's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Feedback process

The ultimate goal of the Family Health Team is to meet and surpass patient expectations while serving patients with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Family Health Team provides services to people with disabilities can be made anonymously by filling out a patient survey on our website or in the office, verbally, or by email accessing via the WDFHT website. All feedback, including complaints, will be directed to the Executive Director. We encourage patients to identify themselves when providing feedback on any issues/concerns so we can make and communicate any modifications necessary to improve patient access.

PROCEDURE:

Accessibility Standard for Employment - Providing Employment to people with Disabilities

The WDFHT and WDFHO is working towards making accessibility a conventional part of finding, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities. The WDFHT and WDFHO will:

- Inform job applicants that the process of hiring will be modified to accommodate their disabilities, if requested
- Build the accessibility needs of employees into their human resources practices
- Provide individualized emergency response information to help employees remain safe.

PROCEDURE:

Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment – Providing information to people with Disabilities

The WDFHT and WDFHO provide accessible parking for patients with disabilities and maintains accessible equipment (eg. High-low barrier free examination table). Patients have wheelchair height access to the reception desk as needed. We continue to monitor our site for any physical barriers to accessibility for patients.

Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence for patients with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by the Executive Director.

RELEVANT FORM(S):

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, CHAPTER 11

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm