

SECTION 4 – Clinical Care

4.03 Accessibility for Patients with Disability

Policy

TC FHT will continuously work to ensure services are accessible (by removing barriers) to patients and staff with disabilities and in alignment with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005). The overarching principles that TC FHT will follow are independence, dignity, integration and equality. Ultimately, all services will be provided in a manner that respects these principles.

See Appendix A - Definitions

Procedures

1. Assistive Devices

Recognizing devices are often essential to patient mobility, TC FHT will,

- * **Make every reasonable effort to accommodate patients who are using assistive devices**
- * **Post a notice of available assistive devices (see Appendix B) in each suite, notifying patients that they may request assistive device be made available to them due to a disability**

- Many patients use assistive devices, such as walkers, canes, or motorized scooters
- Patients will not be denied service or discouraged from using our services on the basis of their use of an assistive device
- We understand that the physical layout of our sites can at times make the use of these devices difficult

Example(s)

- Booking a patient's appointment in a room that is more readily accessible or has a barrier free exam table and lifts

2. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Recognizing that modifications to the way we present information will be necessary, TC FHT will

- * **Consult with persons who have a disability to determine suitable accessible formats or communication support**
- * **Not apply an additional charge for information it reproduces in an accessible format**
- * **Convert written communication to a more accessible format in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability**
- * **Provide the person requesting the information or communication with an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible**
- * **Post a notice of availability of accessible formats (see Appendix B) in each suite, notifying patients that they may request documents they receive be provided to them in available formats due to a disability**

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- When communicating with a person who has a disability, staff should do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability for example,
 - Wide ranges of disabilities are associated with difficulties in speaking, hearing, reading, and/or understanding communication
 - Not all written communication, such as brochures, is developed with accessibility for patients with disabilities in mind
- Modifications to the way we present information to people with disabilities, whether in conversation or in written documents, are sometimes necessary in order for the patient to accurately comprehend the information

Example(s)

Oral communication

- In-person conversation: Patients who have difficulty understanding face-to-face conversation due to a disability may ask TC FHT staff to write-out the content of the conversation, either on paper or on a computer screen, for the patient to read.
- Phone conversation: Patients who have difficulty understanding phone conversation due to a disability may ask TC FHT staff to write-out the content of the conversation in an email, provided both the staff and patient have agreed to this method of communication (taking into account patient privacy). An example of this in practice would be sending confirmation of an appointment via email.

Written communication

- For a patient with a sight-related disability, we may convert a document to large print

Note: Website Accessibility Changes

The regulations associated with the AODA set forth requirements for organizations to make their websites more accessible to persons with disabilities. The timeline below reflects TC FHT's commitment to meeting those requirements.

- January 1, 2014, the TC FHT website will feature the capability of enlarging print
- January 1, 2015, all *new* content on the TC FHT website will conform with WCAG (World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 Level A
- January 1, 2022, all TC FHT website content will conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than:
 - success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live), and
 - success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

3. Use of service animals and support persons

Recognizing service animals & support persons are often essential to patients with disabilities, TC FHT will,

- * **Welcomes the proper involvement of support persons or service animals due to a patient's disability, in accordance with the guidelines below**
- * **There may be areas where service animals are not allowed (e.g. procedure room) in accordance with applicable laws and legislation, in these circumstances TC FHT will consult with the patient to determine other supports that could be implemented as a temporary replacement for the service animal**

Service Animals

- Accompaniment by service animals and support persons is an important part of completing day-to-day tasks for many people with disabilities
- Reference Appendix A for definitions of guide dog and service animals
- If a patient with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the patient must keep

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the animal with him or her

Support persons

- Accompaniment by a support person for a patient with a disability is never necessary except when a support person is needed to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises
- Staff, while welcoming the use of support persons, are not to assume that patients with disabilities wish their support person to be present at all times, particularly during medical exams or when confidential information is being shared
- When in doubt ask the patient (in private) what their preference is, unless the presence of the support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others

Example(s)

- People with vision loss have seeing eye dog who follows direction of owner, alerts owner to changes in elevation and obstacles
- People who are deaf with alert dog
- People with physical disabilities with service or mobility dog pulling wheelchair
- Support person for person with learning disability or mental health disability to help with daily activities or communication tasks

4. Notice of temporary disruptions

- * **When TC FHT is made aware of service disruptions in our buildings, we will advertise this disruption in advance whenever possible**
- Regular maintenance of facilities and equipment can result in temporary disruption of services
- Interruptions are not only inconvenient they can make our facilities and services inaccessible
- As soon as TC FHT receives service disruption notices from service@790bay.com or from 726 Bloor building management, that may affect patients ability to access services, the notice will be posted on the website under 'upcoming events' by the web administrator and in patient waiting areas by medical secretaries
- Notice of the disruption should include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available

Example(s)

- Scheduled elevator maintenance, construction

5. Process for patient feedback related to accessibility

TC FHT will,

- * **Make the 'Accessibility for Patients with Disability' Policy & Procedure available via our website and will post a notice in suites that it is available upon request, in order for patients to understand how we handle accessibility for our patients with disabilities**
- * **Encourage feedback on how we are meeting patient accessibility needs**

Feedback

- Feedback about accessibility for persons with disabilities includes compliments, suggestions and

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concerns but does not include patient complaints related to specific experiences

- Feedback may be submitted through the following forums:
 - In person with provider or at the front desk
 - An email to comments@tcfht.on.ca (Executive Director reviews)
 - A phone call to 416-260-1315, ext 307 (Executive Director)
 - By submitting a digital storage device (such as a USB, diskette or CD)
- If provided verbally, patient feedback should be documented in writing by the staff member receiving and discussed within the suite, then provided to the Executive Director
- In the case of feedback emails provided directly to staff/providers, discuss with the patient sharing this with the Executive Director (or suggest they send to comments@tcfht.on.ca)
- Patient feedback that identifies ways of improving patient accessibility will either be acted on as soon as reasonably practicable, if related to minor or small scale improvements, or will be brought to the Joint Health and Safety Committee

6. Training for staff

TC FHT will,

- * **Utilize The Ministry of Community & Social Services (MCSC) training resources for improving accessibility for patients with disabilities**
 - * **Ensure current and new employees read and understand the training resources and can pass the 'Test Your Knowledge' test**
 - * **Ensure current and new employees read and understand 'Accessibility for Patients with Disabilities' Policy & Procedure**
- Training will be necessary to ensure this accessibility policy is carried out in day-to-day practice
 - All individuals (employees, physicians, students) working on behalf of TC FHT will be required to complete training related to customer service for individuals with disabilities. This includes:

Example(s)

- TC FHT will distribute MCSC's Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Training Resource and collect the final 'Test Your Knowledge' section

7. Other

Employment standards

- Accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities is not only about better-serving our patients, it is also about attracting the greatest number of qualified applicants to positions at TC TFHT as well as ensuring that the workplace is accessible for current staff with disabilities.

Recruitment, assessment or selection process

- Increasing the number of qualified applicants who apply to job openings at TC FHT increases the likelihood of securing the best possible staff member for each position
- Ensuring our recruitment and selection process is accessible to applicants with disabilities increases the applicant pool and our chances of success
- When a candidate is selected for an interview, s/he will be explained that should he/she require any accommodations related to a disability, that TC FHT will make every reasonable effort to make the necessary accommodation
- When offers of employment are made, TC FHT will include in the offer a statement regarding its

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conformance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This statement will also inform the successful candidate that provisions, if necessary, can be discussed as soon as practicable

Informing employees of changes related to accessibility policy

- Whenever there is a change to this policy that will effect accommodations offered to employees with disabilities, TC FHT will communicate the change(s) to all affected employees.

Workplace emergency response information

- Planning for emergencies is a critical, and often overlooked, aspect of workplace safety
- Employees who require personalized emergency response plans, due to a disability, will have a plan developed in consultation with them as soon as practicable after they begin work and the plan will be reviewed whenever the employee moves to a different location or when accommodations need to be reviewed
- The Bay building procedure for evacuating a patient with a disability is as follows:
 - Staff member treating patient will stay with patient (providing their own personal safety is not in immediate danger) and will
 - Let Suite Fire Warden know they will be staying behind with patient
 - Suite Fire Warden MUST advise Fire Chief that there is a staff member and a patient with a disability on floor # _____
 - Staff member staying behind should stand near window and flicker blinds to draw attention to them

Example(s)

- During a fire a patient with a disability is being treated. The clinician treating does is not in immediate danger and advises their Fire Warden (or if they cannot locate this individual another staff member) that they will remain behind. If the staff member, at any time feels they are in danger they should evacuate and immediately report to their Fire Warden. The Fire Warden should then advise the Fire Chief that there is still a person with a disability on floor # _____ but that the staff member has now evacuated.

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Appendix A – Definitions

Disability – in AODA means

- 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 coordination, 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.

Barrier – Anything (invisible and visible) that keeps someone with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. Some examples are attitude, architectural, information and communications, technology and systemic.

Guide Dog - AODA refers to the definition of “guide dog” under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act, which states that: a guide dog is a dog that has been trained as a guide for a blind person at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act. The Ministry of the Attorney General may issue identification cards to identify a person who is blind and his or her guide dog.

Service Animal - Under the standard, an animal is a service animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, or if the person has a letter from a physician or nurse verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to his or her disability. If it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, you are not required to allow the animal on your premises if the person does not have a letter from a physician or nurse, or an identification card from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Support Person - another person who accompanies a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Accessible Formats - may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities;

Communication Supports - may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications

Information - includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning. ("information") O. Reg. 191/11, s. 9 (1)

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Appendix B – Notice of Assistive Devices & Accessible Formats

Working to Provide the Following Assistive Devices

- Barrier free exam table and lifts (budget approved)
- Amplification devices
- Teletypewriter (TTY)
- Relay Service

Availability of accessible formats

- Large Print
- Magnification equipment (monocular or magnifier)
- Interpretation Services

Plans to Provide

- Braille
- ASL Interpretation

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