

Accessibility Plan

Hamilton Health Sciences

Volunteer Association

2020-2025

Accessibility Plan

Executive Summary

HHSVA supports the right of persons of all ages with disabilities to equal opportunity to its shops, services and employment opportunities. Removing barriers to daily living is not a voluntary measure, but a fundamental human right and constitutional right of equality for persons with disabilities. This is provided under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code. HHSVA is committed to build on what it has already achieved and to move towards an organization in which no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed.

1.0 Purpose

To remove the barriers for people with disabilities through increased awareness, understanding and identification of their needs for accessibility planning, implementation and evaluation.

The purpose of this plan is to increase access to shops and services and minimize barriers to participation for people with disabilities within the operations that we manage at the Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS). The goal of the multi year plan is linked to the 2005 *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). The AODA is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

Effective July 27, 2007, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) were received. These standards direct public sector organizations to develop a variety of tools and services to ensure citizens with disabilities engage in full participation in activities within the province of Ontario.

These standards were implemented in the public sector January 1, 2010.

This plan is reflective of ongoing work to address access issues within all HHSVA managed areas within Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS).

This plan will outline:

1. The measures that HHSVA has taken in the past seven years (2011-2013 and 2015-2019).
2. The measures that HHSVA will take over the next 5 years, 2020-2025, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use our shops or services within HHS.

This plan addresses the needs of our customers, our staff, HHS volunteers and members of the community (adapted from AODA website).

Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association is committed to the needs of Ontarians with disabilities accessing our shops or services at HHS; the needs of these individuals are fully considered within the context of the AODA legislation. HHSVA recognizes the need to ensure that future planning for shop layouts and services accessed by individuals with disabilities should be fully informed by individuals living with disabilities.

Aim and Objectives

This report will:

- Describe the process by which HHSVA will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
- Describe the measures HHSVA will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
- Outline the review and monitoring process of the multi-year Accessibility Plan.
- Describe how HHSVA will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

Background

The Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) is aimed at creating a barrier free Ontario by 2025. This plan is meant to continue to build on past progress and accomplishments and to lay the foundation for the development of new accessibility standards under the AODA (2005).

The purpose of the more expansive AODA legislation is to develop, implement and enforce standards of accessibility for all Ontarians. The standards under this Act include the areas of:

- Customer Service (i.e. shops and services to the public; could include business practices and employee training)
- Built Environment (i.e. access to, from and within shops; could include counter heights, aisle/door widths, parking, signs, safety features such as flashing alarms)
- Employment (i.e. hiring and retention of employees)
- Communications and information (i.e. materials and tools such as publications, software applications and web sites)

The AODA adopts the broad definition for disability that is set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. "Disability" is:

- a. 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,
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. a mental disorder, or
- e. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.²

Barriers

What is a barrier?

A "barrier" is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association at a Glance

HHSVA operates shops and services across the Hamilton Health Sciences family of seven unique hospitals, an urgent care centre and a cancer centre serving more than 2.3 million residents of Hamilton and south central Ontario. Our shops and services include gift areas, food areas and management of the parking facilities across Hamilton General Hospital, Juravinski Hospital, Chedoke Hospital, the Juravinski Cancer Centre, McMaster Children's Hospital, McMaster University Medical Centre, Main West Urgent Care Centre and St. Peter's Hospital. We offer a variety of retail products to assist with patient comfort while they are in the hospital.

Our Mission, Vision and Values

The Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association mission is to continually support, enhance and advocate for Hamilton Health Sciences and its volunteers, on behalf of patient care. Our goal is to be the premier Volunteer Association as measured by our substantial donations towards *enhancing patient care*.

Mission

To enhance patient care and quality of life for the HHS community through the donation of profits from the operation of business services and the recognition and support of volunteers.

Vision

To provide valuable support and services to HHS in the provision of patient care

Values

RESPECT

- Promote relationships based on trust and fairness
- Appreciate the contributions of all individuals
- Create a workplace that is welcoming and inclusive for all

EXCELLENCE

- Exceed expectations
- Provide exceptional service and value
- Inspire others to reach their potential

TEAM FOCUS

- Support each other and work together as 'one'
- Appreciate individual differences and abilities
- Celebrate success and overcome challenges together

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Take responsibility for actions and solutions
- Act with integrity and professionalism
- Commit to maximizing donations towards enhancing patient care

INNOVATION

- Seek ways to grow and improve
- Embrace and facilitate change
- Challenge the status quo

LEADERSHIP

- Promote a positive environment
- Lead by example
- Embrace and encourage diversity
- Strive to be the best

Barrier Identification Methodology

Our senior leaders and managers were requested to provide feedback regarding the identification of barriers and strategies to address them. Feedback was also reviewed from patients and families through our customer feedback comment card program.

| Methodology | Description | Status |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reviewing Feedback From Customers | Each area managed by HHSVA regularly receives feedback from customers regarding accessibility issues. Management is then able to direct the concerns to the most appropriate department, i.e. HHS Engineering. | Ongoing throughout the year. |
| Brainstorming / Canvassing Management | E-mail requests and/or meetings were held with senior leaders and managers and other stakeholders who would be in a position to be aware of accessibility issues within our areas. | Barriers identified, and measures taken to mitigate or remove. Ongoing. |
| Environmental Scan | Conducted by Directors, Managers and the Maintenance Team Leader to identify areas in need of repair, refurbishment or renovation to maintain or improve accessibility. | Ongoing throughout the year. Contributed towards this Accessibility Plan. |
| Investigate Staff Feedback | Front line staff are in an excellent position to notice accessibility issues in our areas. Through the use of our Quality Improvement Program we are able to solicit their feedback for improvements. | Ongoing throughout the year. |

Barriers and Opportunities Addressed in 2011-2013

| Type of Barrier | Location | Description of Barrier | Strategy for it's Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Physical and Architectural | Hamilton General Hospital | Coffee Shop did not have dedicated accessible seating areas, and counter height was high. | During planned renovations, barrier free counter and accessible seating was included. |
| Physical and Architectural | Juravinski Hospital | Gift shop counter height was too high. | Counter height was lowered for better accessibility. |
| Physical and Architectural | McMaster Hospital | Gift shop counter height was too high. | Counter height was lowered for better accessibility. |
| Physical and Architectural | Hamilton General Hospital | Parking ramp had issues with poor lighting, lack of accessible doors to parking area, and the Parking Office was not accessible. | Lighting upgrades included converting to LED to improve visibility, painting of the steps and curbs in yellow to improve contrast for visually impaired people, installation of automatic doors to the parking ramp and a barrier free ramp to the Parking Office. |
| Physical and Architectural | Juravinski Hospital | New parking lot planned along with new build. Also Poplar parking ramp required a new elevator. | New parking lot is flat, near the entrance and has new handicap parking spots. The Poplar parking ramp has a new accessible elevator. |
| Policy and Practice | All Sites - Parking | A need for additional resources to respond to physical hazards within the parking garages that could potentially injure patients, visitors and staff. | Implementation of a Maintenance Team Leader to assist with leadership and the ability to provide direction promptly to respond to hazards and barriers. |

Barriers and Opportunities Addressed in 2014-2020

| Type of Barrier | Location | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Informational and Communications | All Sites – Retail and Parking | Seniors often have difficulty with hearing, and or vision. | Complete, visually enlarged font utilized for signage, where possible, to assist with readership. |
| Technological | VA Website | Currently able to adjust font size for those who are visually impaired. | HHS implemented upgrades to make the site accessible by eReaders as well as other disability-related features as part of HHS' <i>Web Accessibility</i> . |
| Physical and Architectural | All sites - Retail | Individuals with walkers, wheelchairs, etc. have challenges maneuvering in gift shops and front server food areas. | Complete, managers ensure all aisles clear of stock to provide for easy accessibility. Included related verbiage in audits. |
| Physical and Architectural | All sites – Food Areas | Individuals in wheelchairs need access to tables within reasonable distance. | Complete, managers now have a designated seating areas with clearly identified handicapped signage on a minimum of 2 tables. |
| Physical and Architectural | General Gift Shop | Current counter height issues and confined space for walkers and wheelchairs upon entry of the shop. | Complete renovations in gift shop incorporated appropriate reduced counter height for wheelchairs and relocated cash counter to back of shop for improved space. |
| Physical and Architectural | McMaster Cafeteria – Baywest Cafe | To eliminate accessibility barriers including counter height at Starbucks, etc. at the McMaster Cafeteria. | Complete, renovations at the cafeteria incorporated i.e., counter height and accessible seating areas |
| Physical and Architectural | St. Peter's Cafeteria | To eliminate any barriers that might currently exist at the St. Peter's cafeteria currently run by HHS. | Complete, renovations at this Café incorporated accessibility standards including lowered counter height and accessible seating |

| Type of Barrier | Location | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
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| Physical and Architectural | St. Peter's Gift Shop | Individuals in wheelchairs having issues entering/exiting the shop due to door width. | Complete, the door to the gift shop was replaced to be wheelchair accessible. |
| Physical and Architectural | JHCC – Concession Garage | Lack of automatic door openers – each level of elevator lobby (except for main level) | Automatic door openers were installed |
| Physical and Architectural | JHCC-Poplar garage | Lack of automatic door openers-each level of elevator lobby(except for main level) | Complete, automatic door openers were installed |
| Physical and Architectural | JHCC-Poplar garage | Lack of accessible ramp leading from the garage onto the sidewalk towards CC (outside of the elevator lobby level B of the garage) | Complete, ramp was installed as part of the construction pertaining to the air tank pipes removal |
| Physical and Architectural | MUMC-Main Garage | Lack of indicators /directional signs where barrier free spaces located | Complete, installed indicators at the top of the rows with barrier free spaces |
| Physical and Architectural | MUMC-South Garage | Lack of elevator or wheelchair lift in stairwells-only stair access between levels | Complete, accessible/barrier free spaces (4) created on top level of garage for easy access to the main hospital entrance as an alternative solution |
| Physical and Architectural | MUMC-South Garage | Lack of handicapped spaces in the South Garage | Complete, configured 2 wheelchair accessible spaces on the rooftop of the garage |

| Type of Barrier | Location | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
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| Physical and Architectural | MUMC-South Garage | Lack of automatic door openers on each level | See above as alternative solution. |
| Physical and Architectural | General-Victoria garage | Lack of automatic door opener on level K (rooftop) | Completed, automatic door openers installed |
| Employment Standards | All Areas / Employment Opportunities on Website and Brochures | (Section 22) Must notify prospective internal and external job applicants that accommodations for applicants with disabilities will be provided on request. | <p>Complete, incorporated verbiage in all job postings with text as follows:</p> <p>Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association fosters a culture of customer and staff safety, whereby all employees are guided by our Mission, Vision and VA Values. Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association is a non-profit organization and all staff are expected to support volunteers and each other.</p> <p>To be considered for this opportunity applicants must apply during the posting period.</p> <p>Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association is an equal opportunity employer and we will accommodate your needs under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Hiring processes will be modified to remove barriers to accommodate those with disabilities, if requested. Should any applicant require accommodation through the application or interview processes,</p> |

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| | | | <p>please make note of this upon setting up of the first interview. This job posting is open to all qualified applicants, however, qualified internal applicants will be considered first. Past performance will be considered as part of the selection process. If you are a previous employee of Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association, please note: the circumstances around an employee's exit will be considered prior to an offer of employment.</p> |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | (Section 23) Employers must notify job applicants who are invited to an interview or selection process that accommodations are available on request. In addition, employers must consult with job applicants to identify the supports they might need. | <p>Verbiage added includes: Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association is an equal opportunity employer and we will accommodate your needs under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Hiring processes will be modified to remove barriers to accommodate those with disabilities, if requested. Should any applicant require accommodation through the application or interview processes, please contact Human Resources at 905-527-4322 x44356 for assistance.</p> |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | (Section 24) Employers must notify successful applicants of its company's policies for accommodation. | <p>Complete, The Early & Safe Return to Work policy is included in the new hire orientation training checklist and posted at the workplace</p> |

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| <p>Employment Standards</p> | <p>All Areas</p> | <p>(Section 28) Large employers must develop a written process to create documented, individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.</p> | <p>Is required to be acknowledged by signature and be dated accordingly by all new hire employees. Human Resources has an Early & Safe Return to Work Policy which addresses the required elements as follows. Elements of the policy include:</p> <p>Employee Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • states the successful work accommodation is dependent upon open communication, cooperation, collaboration and flexibility between all parties in the return to work process. • outlines responsibilities of workplace parties. Specifically, sets expectations that employees take an active role in exploring opportunities for work accommodation and participating in the Early & Safe Return to Work program based upon identified functional abilities or standard precautions. <p>Assessed on an Individual Basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines the factors to be taken into consideration in the development of the Work Accommodation plan including: • The work accommodation must be suitable (safe, meaningful |
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| | | | <p>and consistent with the employee’s functional abilities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work accommodation should be provided in a manner that respects the dignity of the person • There is no compromise to their own, coworker or customer safety as a result of the work accommodation • the policy requires that all work accommodation programs be documented with clear review and end dates established in advance as determined in the RTW meeting by all participants. • the policy Includes how the employer can request an evaluation by on outside medical expert at the employer’s expense, to determine whether and how accommodation can be achieved. • the policy outlines the steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee’s personal information • the policy outlines how often the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated, and how this will be done |
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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the policy includes a written procedure for the management of the temporary work accommodation process• the policy outlines the use of a return to work plan which outlines the required temporary work, timelines and activities. The process includes clear timelines and work accommodation program review dates at specified intervals and states that the temporary accommodation may be provided for no more than 8 weeks in duration, evaluated regularly and based on functional need.• the policy includes a written procedure for the management of long-term work accommodation.• the policy requires that long term work accommodation will be reviewed on an annual basis.• the policy states that if an individual accommodation plan is denied, how the reasons for the denial will be communicated to the employee |
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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the policy notes how an employee will be provided with an individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the accessibility needs due to a disability including noting that alternate formats of the Return to Work Plan may be provided to meet an employee's accessibility needs, if required (i.e. audio, large print, etc). |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | Employers must inform all employees of their policies to support employees with disabilities. Employers must provide this information to new employees as soon as possible. Employers must also provide updates of existing policy changes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VA has an Early & Safe Return to Work policy statement that is posted in all areas for staff's reference. This policy is discussed upon hire and is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. New Managers or those in supervisory positions are trained upon hire to understand their role in the accommodation process. |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | Upon receiving a request for accommodation, all employers must consult with the employee to provide job-related or other workplace information in accessible formats. | The Early and Safe Return to Work Policy notes that alternate formats of the return to work plan may be provided to meet an employee's accessibility needs, if required (i.e. audio, large print, etc). |

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| <p>Employment Standards</p> | <p>All Areas</p> | <p>Every employer must provide, and review when necessary, individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities.</p> <p>If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information require assistance and with the employee's consent, the employer shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the employer to provide assistance to the employee.</p> <p>Employers will provide the information required as soon as practicable after the employer becomes aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.</p> <p>Every employer shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the employee moves to a different area • When the employee's overall accommodations, needs or plans are reviewed; and • When the employer reviews its general emergency response policies | <p>New Return to Work Plans contain a section for the type of assistance required during a workplace emergency.</p> |
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| <p>Employment Standards</p> | <p>All Areas</p> | <p>All employers, with some exceptions, are required to develop and have in place a return to work (RTW) process for employees returning to work following a disability-related absence.</p> <p>Every employer, other than an employer that is a small organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall develop and have in place a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work; and • Shall document the process <p>The return to work process shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the steps the employer will take to | <p>Revisions were made to the Early and Safe Return to Work policy to include a written procedure for the management of the temporary work accommodation process including employees who are returning to work from a period of extended absence due to injury or illness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the policy requires employees to advise their manager or HR Manager if work accommodation is required. A Functional Abilities Form will be provided to their respective Manager should accommodation be required so that limitations are accounted for following an absence from work for a work-related injury/illness. • the policy notes that |
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| | | <p>facilitate the return to work of employees who were absent because their disability required them to be away from work; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use documented individual accommodation plans. <p>The return to work process requirements do not override any other return to work process created by or under any other statute.</p> | <p>temporary work accommodation will be made available and offered to an employee, as appropriate, immediately following a work related injury / illness in accordance to the identified functional abilities or using standard restrictions as a precautionary measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the policy requires that employees who are off work related to a personal illness or injury submit documentation of their functional abilities in order to assist with facilitating a modified work / work accommodation program • the policy requires that all work accommodation programs be documented with clear review and end dates established in advance as determined in the RTW meeting by all participants. |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | <p>Large employers must document an employee's RTW process and include the details in the employee's individual accommodation plan.</p> | <p>The Early and Safe Return to Work Policy addresses this requirement by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the policy determines the factors to be taken into consideration in the development of the return to work plan including: • The work accommodation must be suitable (safe, meaningful and consistent with the employee's functional abilities) • The work accommodation should be provided in a manner that respects the dignity of the person |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is no compromise to their own, coworker or customer safety as a result of the work accommodation • the policy requires that all work accommodation measures be documented with clear review and end dates established in advance as determined in the RTW meeting and/or discussion by all participants. |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | Employers that use performance management should take into account the accessibility needs of their employees with disabilities. Performance management means activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity, and effectiveness, with the goal of facilitating employee success. | Incorporation of added wording into the annual review template that assesses the staff's annual performance to ensure that accommodation is accounted for when assessing and attempting to improve performance. |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | Employers that provide career development and advancement opportunities should take into account the accessibility needs of their employees who have disabilities. This includes providing additional responsibilities within an employee's current position and the movement of an employee from one job to | Addition of AODA language into existing HR policies regarding recruitment & selection. |

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| | | <p>another in an organization that may be higher in pay provide greater responsibility, or be at a higher level in the organization or any combination of them and for both additional responsibilities and employee movement is usually based on merit or seniority, or a combination of them.</p> | |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | <p>Employers that use redeployment should consider the accessibility needs of their employees with disabilities. Redeployment is defined as the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization.</p> | <p>Incorporation of wording into the Employee Transfers section of the Policy and Procedure Manual to account for the necessity to consider the accessibility needs of the employee with disabilities when transfers are considered.</p> |
| HHSVA Policies | All Areas | <p>Improvement in our VA Values to include more diversity and inclusivity verbiage</p> | <p>Included the values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a workplace that is welcoming and inclusive for all ➤ Embrace and encourage diversity |

Barriers and Opportunities Identified to be Addressed in 2021-2025

| Type of Barrier | Location | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Informational and Communications | All Sites – Retail and Parking | Seniors often have difficulty with hearing, and or vision. | Obtain verification from AODA for limitations to font sizes. |
| Physical and Architectural | All Sites - Parking | Visually impaired might have issue noting where the help button upon enter/exit of the parking garages and pay stations. | Upgrades to enhance legibility will be considered for 2022/2023 fiscal. |
| Physical and Architectural | JHCC-Poplar garage | Lack of accessible ramp leading from the garage onto the sidewalk towards CC (outside of the elevator lobby level B of the garage) | Ramp will be constructed as part of the construction pertaining to the air tank pipes removal (Engineering cost) |
| Physical and Architectural | UCC-Staff Lot | Wheelchair accessible walkway from parking lot to the sidewalk-one doesn't exist at present | For consideration as part of the Parking Structural Capital budget 2022/2023 fiscal. |

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| Type of Barrier | Location | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
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| | | another in an organization that may be higher in pay provide greater responsibility, or be at a higher level in the organization or any combination of them and for both additional responsibilities and employee movement is usually based on merit or seniority, or a combination of them. | |
| Employment Standards | All Areas | Employers that use redeployment should consider the accessibility needs of their employees with disabilities. Redeployment is defined as the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization. | Incorporation of wording into the Employee Transfers section of the Policy and Procedure Manual to account for the necessity to consider the accessibility needs of the employee with disabilities when transfers are considered. |

AODA Standards Education Plan 2014-2025

| Standard | Affected | Education Modality |
|------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Employment | All staff | Ongoing, all staff are trained in AODA within 2 months of hire utilizing HHS e-learning. Staff sign off and date completion of this training on their orientation checklist. Note: Not applicable to Volunteers in our areas |

Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association Plan for Web Accessibility

The HHSVA utilizes the HHS website portal, and as such, the VA falls under the HHS umbrella of compliance to accessibility standards. Their plan is listed below.

Hamilton Health Sciences Plan for Web Accessibility

Overview

The following is a breakdown of Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) plan for meeting and maintaining the accessibility standards for its external and internal websites as determined by the the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG).

Legal Responsibilities

Hamilton Health Sciences falls under the definition of Public sector organizations, businesses and non-profit organizations (50+ staff). With this classification, we are required to meet the following accessibility standards on the associated timelines.

2014 New public websites and web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level A.

2021 All public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012, must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio descriptions).

In regards to the 2014 deadline, The HHS Information and Communications Technology team (ICT) has been working closely with internal stakeholder to ensure that any sites currently in development will meet these standards. 2014 will see the launching of 3-5 new external sites, all of which will conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.

In the meantime, HHS/ICT has been working with our vendor Medseek to assess the current state of our external facing website, including the limitations placed upon it because of its inherent Content Management System (CMS).

Together we have drafted an initial document to redesign this site with the following criteria

- a) Strict conformation to WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards
- b) A portable design template that will allow for ALL external facing CMS-based sites to meet these same standards

A second phase of our plan is already in the initial discussion phase, that being the redressing of our intranet (Corp web). This site will also be examined and either have a similarly new template drawn up to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards or potentially replaced with another CMS system such as Sharepoint.

Associated Issue: Posting of Documents to the Web

In addition to making websites compliant to AODA standards, there is the related issue of making documents posted on the web equally accessible.

There are set steps recommended by WC3 to ensure documents are fully accessible and even offer step-by-step instructions for staff as they prepare documents for posting. These steps are available here: http://www.doi.gov/ocio/information_management/upload/Guide_for_Creating_Accessible_Document_s.pdf

Implementing these guidelines will require staff education. This document will not only be made available on our corporate intranet, but also there will be a highly visible cue on the homepage of the site alerting staff to the need for and location of this document.

Our Commitment

HHS will not wait until 2021 to implement these changes and will, over the next 2 years, act proactively to meet these standards and exceed them. In addition HHS and ICT will work to continually assess its web sites and content to ensure compliance is ongoing.

Planning for AODA Legislation and Multi-Year Plan

A steering committee is in place within the hospital with the mandate to assure that HHS meets the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disability Act (AODA 2005). The committee includes representation from HHS Public Relations, Information Communication Technology, Facilities Management, Capital Development, Clinical Practice and Education, Human Resources, Emergency Preparedness, Patient Experience, Clinical areas and several community partners, to develop and monitor HHS's multi year plan. This committee will establish working groups to address the requirements and oversee the implementation of the standards of the AODA, while providing leadership and oversight.

Communication of the Plan

Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association Accessibility Plan will be posted on the HHS web site.

The plan is posted on the Hospital's website (www.hhsc.ca) in screen reader compatible format. It is also available through Public Relations in Braille, large print or audio format upon request. Public Relations can be reached at 905-521-2100 ext. 75387.

Review and Monitoring Process

The AODA Steering Committee will be responsible for ongoing monitoring and review of the implementation of improvements to provide enhanced service and access to persons with a disability.

The Committee will also be responsible for approving corporate accessibility policies, procedures and communication materials as developed by the working groups.

Related Policies:

- Accessible Customer Service Policy