



## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Section	Organization
Category	Public Relations
Number	1207-V2

**Policy Title: AODA: Customer Service Policy  
Customer Service Standard**

**Background:** The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted in 2005 in order to facilitate the development of specific standards with respect to improving accessibility across the province. Ontario's first accessibility standard, the customer service standard, came into force on January 1, 2008. The standard outlines what organizations must do in order to ensure that customer service is accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.

**Purpose:**

- This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer services for the organization, in accordance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Customer Service Standard
- This policy applies to all employees, physicians, volunteers and agents of the organization
- This policy provides guidelines for providing patient centred care to people with disabilities.

**Policy:**

The Dryden Regional Health Centre (DRHC) recognizes that persons with disabilities should be provided with an equal opportunity to access goods and information in a manner consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality as stated in the regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. In fulfilling our Mission, Dryden Regional Health Centre will strive at all times to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles:

- Dignity and Independence – Customer service will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- Integrated Services – that allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar manner as other clients.
- Equal Opportunity – People with disabilities will be given an equal opportunity to use and benefit from services.

**Definitions:**

**Accessible** means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, entered; obtainable.

**Disability** means:

- Any degree of physical 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 impairment, 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
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

**Procedure:**

Dryden Regional Health Centre is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

**1. Communication**

We will communicate with people in ways that take into account their disability. Consideration is given to the way in which individuals express, receive and process information without making assumptions about a particular disability. [AODA: Communicating with a Person with a Disability](#)

**2. Telephone Services**

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will offer to communicate with customers by alternate format if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available. [AODA: Accessible Equipment and Services](#)

**3. Assistive Devices**

We are committed to serving people who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. We will also ensure that the appropriate staff knows how to use the assistive devices available on our premises for customers. These may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, personal sound amplification devices. DRHC will make reasonable efforts to ensure that assistive devices can be used to access services.

**4. Billing**

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: large print, e-mail or verbal

communication. We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

## **5. Use of service animals**

We are 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. When a patient, family member or visitor enters the hospital with a service animal every effort will be made to accommodate and ensure that the surroundings will allow the individual to effectively maintain their relationship with the animal. If this is not possible due to health or safety concerns, a mutually agreed upon location for the animal may be identified for a limited time. In this instance, other provisions will be made to ensure that the individual receives the assistance that the service animal otherwise provides. [Service Animals - AODA](#)

## **6. Support Persons**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have the support person present while on the premises unless it becomes a health or safety risk. In this instance, other provisions will be made to ensure that the individual receives the support otherwise provided by the support person. In some cases, it may be necessary to seek the consent of the person with the disability prior to discussing confidential information in front of the support person.

## **7. Notice of temporary disruption**

Notice of Service Disruptions must be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities may use to access DRHC goods or services are temporarily unavailable or if the goods or service are expected in the near future to be temporarily unavailable. This notice will include the following information:

- Information about the disruption
- The reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- Description of alternative facilities or services, if available
- Contact information

In the case of an unscheduled disruption, the notice will be placed at all public entrances, customer service counters and at the location of the service disruption as soon as practically possible. [AODA: Notice of Disruption in Service](#)

In the case of a scheduled disruption, DRHC will post the Notice prior to the disruption, at the physical location, on the website and if appropriate will advertise the disruption with local media outlets. The Notice will be posted to allow for sufficient time to inform clients. [AODA: Notice of Disruption in Service, Routine Maintenance](#)

Patients may also be contacted by phone prior to an appointment to advise them of the change/disruption and alternatives.

## **8. Training for staff**

All employees, volunteers, physicians and others who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of DRHC will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Training will be provided to each person according to his or her needs and duties. Training for new employees will be provided

during the general orientation before commencement of duties. A record of the dates on which training is provided and the individuals to whom it is provided will be kept.

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

**Training will include:**

- 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 equipment or devices available (eg TTY) that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing DRHC services.
- DRHC policies, procedures and practices relating to the customer service standard.

**9. Documentation and Feedback process**

The ultimate goal of DRHC is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way DRHC provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by letter, verbally, by email, or feedback card.

The process for feedback:

- All feedback will be directed to the Vice-President of Clinical Support Services and Service Quality. Clients can expect a response within 3 business days.
- Complaints will be addressed according to practices as established in the DRHC complaint management procedures.

The feedback process is promoted on the website, through internal patient satisfaction surveys and the brochure, "Your Opinion Matters to Us".

**10. Modifications to this or other policies**

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of DRHC that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

**11. Notice of availability of documents**

Dryden Regional Health Centre will provide notice of the availability of the documents, required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, (O. Reg 429/07) upon request. Notice of availability will be provided on the web site and through the brochure 'Your Opinion Matters to Us'. [Accessibility: Notice and Provision of Documents in Accessible Formats](#)

**12. Format of documents**

**POLICY**

The Dryden Regional Health Centre shall upon request give a copy of the policies, practices and procedures required under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service to any person. DRHC will take into account the persons’ ability to access the information and will provide the document or information contained in the document in a format that meets those needs as agreed upon with the person.

**13. Related Procedures/Resources**

- 13.1 [Service Animals - AODA](#)
- 13.2 [Accessibility: Notice and Provision of Documents in Accessible Formats](#)
- 13.3 [AODA: Communicating with a Person with a Disability](#)
- 13.4 [AODA: Serving Customers with Disabilities: Putting People First](#)

**14. Forms**

- 14.1 [AODA: Acknowledgement of Customer Service Policies](#)
- 14.2 [AODA: Notice of Disruption in Service](#)

<b>POLICY APPROVAL</b>	
Approving Authority: <b>Angela Bujold, VP Clinical Support Services and Service Quality</b>	Date of Approval: <b>20/06/2011</b>
Date of Last Review: <b>20/06/2011</b>	Date of Next Review: <b>20/06/2014</b>