ADM 01-07, Customer Service under the AODA

**PURPOSE**

Ont. Reg. 191/11 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005 (AODA) makes Nipigon District Memorial Hospital responsible for providing accessible goods and services under its Customer Services Standard.

**SCOPE**

This policy is intended to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA.

For the purpose of this policy includes anyone who, on behalf of Nipigon Hospital, is providing access to the goods, services, and facilities for persons with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

**DEFINITIONS**

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| assistive devices -  | technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids that are used to increase, maintain, or improve how a person with a disability can function. Examples may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, and assistive listening devices. |
| 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. |
| barrier - | anything that keeps someone with a disability from participating in all aspects of society. Examples of barriers include architectural or structural barriers, information or communications barriers, technical barriers and attitudinal barriers. |
| communications -  | the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received. |
| communication supports - | supports that individuals with disabilities may need to assess information. These may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications. |
| customer -  | the direct user or recipient of a service. |
| disability - | as defined under the AODA and 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 b rain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deadness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheel chair 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
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| information - | includes data, facts, and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning. |
| service animal - | an animal acting as a service animal for a person with a disability, * 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 provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability
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| support person - | in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help communication, mobility. Personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. |
| temporary disruption -  | Is a short term planned or unplanned disruption to facilities or services that the public usually uses to obtain goods and services. |

**PRINCIPLES**

* Goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
* Goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities with the same attention to quality and timeliness that is provided to others.
* Goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with regular services, unless an alternate measure is necessary, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from our services.
* Customers with disabilities are given equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from our goods and services.
* Whether a person’s disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their need for disability related accommodation respected whenever they access our health care facility, goods and services.

**PROCEDURE**

At Nipigon Hospital, managers are accountable for ensuring that this policy is communicated to all staff and is carried out consistently. Staff are responsible for meeting these requirements in their daily work and ensuring that accessible customer service is provided to all customers in accordance with this document.

Training

Training is provided to employees, volunteers, those who participate in the development of Hospital policies, and any other person who provides goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the Hospital.

Training will be provided as appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons who provide goods and services and will include a review of the:

* purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005
* requirements of the Customer Services Standard of Ont. Reg 191/11
* Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities
* Hospital policies, practices and procedures on the provision of services to persons with disabilities

New staff as well as those who take on new duties that involve interaction with the public or other third parties will receive training as part of their orientation; training will be provided as soon as is practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties.

Training will also be provided regularly, and when changes are made to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The Hospital keeps a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the namesof employees who participated in the training.

Assistive Devices

Nipigon Hospital will strive to effectively serve persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

We will inform customer of assistive devices (TTY, sound implication systems, mobility devices, video remote interpreting services, etc) available at their various locations and ensure staff are trained on how to use them.

Use of Service Animals

Persons with disabilities may bring their service animal to the premises that are open to the general public and will be able to keep their service animal with them unless the animal is expressly excluded from the premises by law. In cases where a service animal is excluded by law, staff will ensure that appropriate alternative arrangements are offered to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use

or benefit from the goods and services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the person with a disability may be required to provide proof.

* Proof can be from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for

reasons relating to his or her disability or documentation that shows the customer is certified as a service animal handler.

* It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

Use of Support Persons

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person (sign language interpreter, real time captioner, or attendants) will be allowed to enter the premises open to the public or to a third parties with that person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to that person while at the Hospital.

On rare occasions, the service provider may determine that a support person is required to protect the health or safety of the customer with a disability or that of others on the premises. In these cases an explanation must be provided and documented.

In situations where the confidential information of a customer with a disability is to be discussed, the Hospital must get consent from the customer (verbal or written) allowing the support person to be present.

Information and Communication

The Hospital will ensure that communications with our customers will take the accessibility needs of people with disabilities into account. Staff will communicate using methods that enable people with disabilities to use, receive and request services and facilities with the same quality and timeliness as others.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

When a customer requests documentation or information in an accessible format or with a communication support, the Hospital will seek to provide the document or information in a way that considers the accessibility needs of the person with the disability.

The Hospital will inform the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports upon request, by placing notification in conspicuous places (website, job postings, letters of offer).

In responding to a request for an accessible format or communication support, the Hospital will consult with the person with a disability to determine the appropriate format or support.

Requests for accessible formats and communication supports shall be met in a timely manner. If the Hospital is unable to meet the request in a timely manner, an explanation will be provided to the requestor, or where required, determine with the requestor, an alternate method for meeting the request.

No cost shall be charged to the individual to produce an accessible format or to provide a communication support. If there is normally a charge for a document or service, the Hospital will charge the same cost for the document or service as would be charged to others, without passing along the cost of the conversion or support.

When a request for an accessible format or communication support is unable to be met such as when information is not convertible as it is technically not feasible to convert it, or the technology or service needs to convert the information is not readily available. In these cases, the Hospital will provide an explanation to the individual making the request as to why the information is unconvertible and will also provide a summary of the unconvertible information to the customer.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

The Hospital is required to make their website accessible to people with disabilities by conforming to the World Wide Webs Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 which are international standards to making websites and web content accessible to users with disabilities.

The Hospital’s internet website and web content, and intranet shall conform with the WCAG 2.0 standards at level AA in accordance with the schedule set out in Ont. Reg 191/11 as required as of January 1, 2020.

Feedback Processes

The Hospital will inform customers of methods available for providing feedback, and will ensure that these methods are accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes the option to provide feedback and obtain a response to that feedback, through an alternate method and/or with communication supports upon request.

Feedback may be provided in person, by telephone/TTY, in writing, by email, or by any other communication technology as required.

Privacy will be respected and all feedback will be reviewed for action that may be taken to improve services at the Hospital.

Complaints will be addressed in accordance with the Hospital’s Patient Relations Process and the Long Term Care Complaints Process

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

In the event of an unplanned or unexpected disruption in the Hospital or with its services used by persons with disabilities, the Hospital will provide customers with notice of the disruption. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption is expected to last, whether any alternative services are available, and shall include a contact name and phone number. The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters at the Hospital. Depending on the nature of the disruption, external notices will also be provided. This notice will e provided in an accessible format.

Notice of temporary service disruption shall include:

* Program / Service
* Reason
* Start Date
* Anticipated end date