

HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD PUBLIC HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section:	HUMAN RIGHTS, ACCESS and WORKING ENVIRONMENT
Sub-Section:	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA)
Policy Title:	Accessible Client Service
Approved by:	Medical Officer of Health
Date:	01 July 2016

PURPOSE:

To specify how Hastings Prince Edward Public Health will provide accessible services and programs to our clients.

POLICY:

In keeping with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Hastings Prince Edward Public Health will provide programs and services in a manner that is based upon the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity to all health unit clients.

Persons with a disability shall be given an opportunity equal to that given to other clients to obtain, use and benefit from HPEPH programs and services. Services will be integrated with those provided to the broader public, unless alternative ways of providing the service or program are necessary for equal opportunity.

The Health Unit will ensure the *Accessible Client Service Policy* is posted on the web site and at all locations.

PROCEDURE:

1.0 COMMUNICATION:

The Health Unit will communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that will take into account their disability. Clients with disabilities will be offered alternative communication formats that will meet the needs of the client when requested. Communication may also be provided by the use of assistive devices such as TTY or the use of Translators, either provided by the Health Unit, or accompanying the client.

Staff will be trained in how to communicate and interact with clients with various disabilities in order to ensure such clients have full access to health unit services.

2.0 USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS, SUPPORT PERSONS AND ASSISTIVE DEVICES:

a. Service Animal

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health will welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal that is not in contravention of any law (such as food prep areas) when obtaining health unit services. Where service animals are required, the Health Unit may ask for proper documentation from a regulated health professional to verify the designation of a trained service animal. (see **Table A** Regulated Health Professionals below)

Appropriate arrangements to ensure adequate care of service animals will be made when they accompany clients with disabilities.

Table A- Regulated Health Professionals

Doctors	Optometrists	Chiropractors
Nurses	Physiotherapists	Occupational Therapist
Audiologists/Speech Language Pathologists		Psychologists
Psychotherapists/Registered Mental Health Therapists		

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b. Support Person

The Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit will welcome support persons accompanying people with disabilities. This may also include translators either provided by the Health Unit or by the client.

In certain cases HPEPH might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons. The following steps should be considered as part of this decision making process:

- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

Due to privacy and consent issues, support persons will be subject to the same confidentiality requirements as the person with disabilities who is obtaining the service and the support person may be required to sign a waiver with respect to privacy or confidentiality.

Fees will not be charged for a support person when a client is accessing services where an admission fee is applicable. Efforts will be made to ensure clients will be informed of these practices.

c. Assistive Devices

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Health Unit's services.

The person with a disability is responsible to ensure that his/her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

The Health Unit will make reasonable arrangements to have assistive devices available for clients with disabilities when requested.

3.0 ACCESSIBILITY OF MEETINGS:

Program managers will make reasonable efforts to ensure that all public meetings or services are in an accessible physical environment where possible and that participants have access to the meeting contents and proceedings or a reasonable alternative where requested. Where requested to serve the needs of a person with a disability, reasonable alternate forms of support, assistance or communication with those in attendance at meetings will be provided.

All advertisements of health unit services or schedules of events will include a contact number for clients with disabilities to make requests for accessibility arrangements.

4.0 NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS:

When general temporary disruptions occur to the Health Unit's facilities, the Director of Administration will ensure that notice is provided by posting the information in visible places and on the Health Unit's website (hpepublichealth.ca) or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

When temporary disruptions occur to specific program locations or to services arranged for use by people with disabilities, the appropriate program management will arrange to contact clients who have requested accessibility services to inform them of the disruption. They will also provide a general notice of the temporary disruption that will be placed on the Health Unit's website and posted conspicuously at the location of the disruption. This notice will include information about

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the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The Health Unit will make all reasonable efforts to provide notice as soon as possible.

5.0 ACCESSIBLE HEALTH UNIT DOCUMENTS:

The Health Unit will provide any publicly available documents or information in an appropriate alternative format for persons with disability upon request.

If we are not able to meet the person's particular requirement in a reasonable timeframe, staff will work with the client to determine an alternate method of communication

All health unit publications will include a contact number for clients with disabilities to make requests to have the material provided in an alternative format.

6.0 FEEDBACK PROCESS:

The Health Unit will ensure that a feedback process is in place to generate and respond to client suggestions and complaints. The feedback process will be offered in a variety of ways including in person, by mail, by email, telephone or other methods appropriate to the client and their disability.

7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each department or program will be responsible for intake and response of requests for accessible service and for contracting any staff, services or devices required to provide the accommodation. The applicable program staff will be responsible for communicating arrangements to requesting clients and for notifying them of any change in or temporary disruption to the accommodation arrangements.

8.0 TRAINING ON CLIENT SERVICE:

The Health Unit will ensure training is provided to all members in the organization. This includes: employees, volunteers, 3rd party contractors/consultants, students/interns, BOH members, and others who deal with the public on behalf of the Health Unit.

Training will include but not be limited to the following:

- a) Understanding the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the client service standards.
- b) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- c) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person and how to use assistive devices provided by the Health Unit.
- d) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Health Unit's services.
- e) Policies and procedures that affect the way programs and services are provided to people with disabilities.

Human resources will maintain records of training including the names of staff trained, date of training and level of training. Levels of training are role dependent.

Training on this policy must be renewed every three years.

All new members of the organization will participate in Accessible Client Service training through Hastings Prince Edward Public Health's AODA Program.

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9.0 EVALUATION:

This policy is reviewed and updated as required in accordance with health unit policy. As part of the review, the effectiveness of the AODA program and training will be evaluated and legislative changes incorporated. Deficiencies in the program will be noted and documented for change in an action plan.

Evaluation methods will include:

- A review of the organizational statistics/data regarding accommodations provided and client requests made.
- Comparison of these procedures to industry standards/best practices.
- A review of the training and communication records to evaluate compliance.
- Random spot checks/interviews to assess employees' knowledge of requirements under the Act and methods of providing accessible customer service.

10.0 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

See FileHold A02 – AODA Committee – Published Documents.

Created: Sep 2013
Revised: Aug 2014
Jul 2016