

1-A STANDARDS

Approved by: Board of Directors

Date: October 30, 2018

1-A-25 AODA Customer Service RequirementsApplies to: All Employees, Students, Volunteers
and Board Members

Effective Date: November 29, 2011

Reviewed/Revised: August 2018

Next Review Date August 2021

Policy

It is the policy of the Gateway Community Health Centre that all employees strive to provide primary health care in a manner that is accessible to all of our clients, and respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to offering equal opportunity to access our programs and services and to providing the benefit of the same services, in the same place and in a similar way to all clients.

Purpose

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, (AODA) Gateway is committed to serving GCHC clients with disabilities. This policy exists to achieve better access to service for clients with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, the Executive Director.

Procedure

All clients registering for primary care and clients registering for programs and/or groups will be asked to identify whether or not they have a disability. Staff will incorporate the identified disability into the client's plan of care. Once a disability has been identified, appropriate resources to support the client should also be noted in the plan of care, i.e., Canadian Hearing Society for interpreter services, CNIB for rehabilitation, support and assistive technologies.

All GCHC employees shall integrate within their practice and program areas the following:

Communication – Oral and Written

- Communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- Educate all GCHC staff on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- For clients who have self-identified a disability, a communication plan will be established and implemented with those clients on an individual basis in order to facilitate communication between the Centre, service providers and the client.
- When providing a document to a person with a disability, Gateway will work with the individual to determine options in order to provide the document or the information contained in the document in a format that takes the person's disability into account.
- We will answer questions clients may have about the content of the document in person or by telephone.

Telephone Services

Provide accessible telephone service by educating staff to communicate with clients over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

For clients who have a hearing or speech impairment, GCHC staff will be educated on communicating with clients via the TTY (telephone teletype) relay service and developing a communication strategy specific to the individual client's needs.

Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our programs and services. For GCHC clients who have self-identified a disability, staff will familiarize themselves with unique assistive devices utilized by the client. A staff person may also provide assistance in completing forms.

We will also ensure that staff members* know how to use the following assistive devices available on our premises for clients: electronic exam bed, weigh scale, OTN clinical cart devices, wheelchairs and crutches.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

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. We will also ensure that all staff, and others dealing with the public are properly trained in providing services to people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

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 enter Gateway's premises with their support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on our premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

Gateway will provide all clients, including those with disabilities, with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at GCHC public entrances and at reception on the premises. In the event of a prolonged power outage or inclement weather resulting in an unexpected closure of the Centre, scheduled clients will be contacted by telephone. In the event of a prolonged closure, GCHC may inform the community at large through its website, radio announcements, etc.

Training for Staff

Gateway will provide education to all employees, students, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties, on behalf of Gateway, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of client service policies, practices and procedures including Board members. Training will be provided as soon as practicable after an individual assumes their responsibilities at GCHC as part of the orientation process.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Integrate communication skills that facilitate interaction 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 electronic exam bed, weigh scales, OTN clinical cart devices, wheelchair, crutches*

- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Gateway's programs and services
- Gateway's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard. Other Gateway policies that protect the rights of persons with disabilities include, but are not limited to: Policy 1.2 Client Bill of Rights, Policy 2.2 Employment Equity, and Policy 2.12 Anti-Discrimination.

* *Specific to staff member's role in providing service.*

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way programs and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Gateway is to meet client expectations while serving clients with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well these expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Gateway provides programs and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, by e-mail, telephone, or in writing. All feedback will be directed to the Executive Director. Clients can expect to hear back within ten (10) business days.

All client complaints, including those from persons with a disability, are addressed according to Gateway's complaint management procedure, which is specified in policy 1-A-14 Client/Community Incident and Complaints. Accommodation will be made to ensure that clients receive a response in a manner that takes into account their disability.

Reporting and Documentation

Gateway is required to submit an accessibility report to the Ministry of Community and Social Services annually certifying its compliance with the customer service standard of the AODA. Gateway is also required to document its compliance with the regulation and make that information available to the public. A copy of our Accessibility Report Confirmation, AODA Customer Service Requirements (policy 1-A-25), and Client/Community Incident and Complaints (policy 1-A-14) are posted in the lobby and are available on-line or by request.

Modifications to this or other policies

Gateway is committed to developing client 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 Gateway that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.