
Accessibility Policy

REFERENCE CODE: ADM01-D **CURRENT STATUS:** Approved **APPROVAL DATE:** September 1, 2016 **NEXT REVIEW DATE:** September 1, 2019

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all services and programs provided by the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre.

DEFINITIONS:

Assistive Devices means an assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting. Includes, but not limited to: qualified interpreters, walkers, assistive listening systems, television captioning and decoders, video tapes, both open and closed captioned, TTY/Ds, transcriptions, readers, taped texts, Braille and large print materials. Any similar device or service that is needed to make spoken or aural language accessible is also considered an auxiliary aid.

Disability means 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 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, or an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

Sensory Impaired means a person who is hard of hearing, deaf, partially sighted and/or blind or physically unable to speak.

Sign Language and Sign Systems mean visual or tactile ways of communicating thoughts, ideas and feeling through American Sign Language or manual signs and gestures with specifically defined vocabulary.

OBJECTIVE:

Accountability

The Board of Directors and Management Team at the SHCHC are accountable to employees, clients and to the Government of Ontario for meeting the standards set by the AODA and its regulations.

The Centre will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines their strategies to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under AODA and its regulations. This plan will be posted on the Centre's website and available in an accessible format, upon request. Furthermore, the plan will be updated every five years.

Provision of Services

In keeping with SHCHC values of providing free and equitable access in a welcoming and supportive environment, SHCHC will provide integrated services for people with disabilities. SHCHC understands that equitable access sometimes requires different treatment including separate or specialized services. However, such services will be offered in a way that respects the dignity and full participation of people with disabilities.

a. Service Animals

SHCHC continues to welcome service animals that are needed to assist people with disabilities.

b. Support people

SHCHC welcomes people with disabilities and accompanying support people who accompanies help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or to access goods or services. In most cases, SHCHC does not charge for its services that it offers. However, when admission fees are charged for Program programs or services, admission fees will be waived for support people or advance notice will be given of any admission fees that support people must pay.

c. Assistive Devices

SHCHC offers a broad range of assistive devices to meet the needs of people with disabilities and will make reasonable efforts to permit the use of assistive devices that enable people with disabilities to use SHCHC's services. SHCHC also recognizes that accessibility can be achieved and provided in different ways.

Communication and Information

Program staff and volunteers will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes their needs into consideration.

a. Public Safety Information

Information related to emergency procedures and plans, as well as public safety information will be available to the public. The Centre will provide the information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

b. Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

SHCHC will provide notice of service disruptions in service which affect clients with disabilities, which include the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption will last and a description of available alternatives, if any. In the event of an unplanned disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible.

c. Information and Documentation on Accessible Customer Service

SHCHC will document its policies, practices and procedures as required by the Customer Service Standard. Members of the public will be notified of the availability of this documentation which will be available in a variety of formats on the Centre's website.

Feedback process

SHCHC welcomes feedback and makes information available to all clients on how it may be provided. Feedback is accepted in a variety of

formats. Assistance is available to support all clients, including people with disabilities, in providing feedback.

Employee/Volunteer Training

The SHCHC will ensure that mandatory training is provided to all employees, volunteers students on the following content:

- Overview and requirements of the AODA and its Regulation,
- Goal and mandate of the AODA,
- Definition of disability and types of disabilities,
- Barriers to accessibility,
- Principles of effective client services,
- Proper etiquette for interacting with people with disabilities,
- How to recognize and respond appropriately to people using personal, supports, service animals and assistive technology.

The e-learning tool provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services entitled *Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service* will be used as part of Human Resource's orientation process for all new employees. This training will be coordinated by the Human Resources Officer who has been provided with the resources necessary (desk and laptop with the e-learning module) to deliver the training.

Language of Service

a. Process for selecting languages to be used in providing service

At SHCHC, the approach to the selection of languages for the provision of interpretation services involves the use of a number of factors in making the selections, including:

- Obtaining the views on language services required from front-line staff responsible for program and service delivery.
- Applying demographic information to identify emerging trends at a City and neighborhood level.
- Ascertaining the language needs of a particular community. When narrowing the target audience to specific communities, the language needs of ethno-racial groups in those communities must be determined. This is often the case for certain public health or public education programs where staff is able to identify specific ethnic communities, or specific population groups, as the intended recipients of a service.
- Ascertaining the language needs of a particular geographic area or neighborhood. When the service is intended for easily identifiable geographic areas, the prominent languages spoken in that particular area must be determined.
- Type of information to be communicated. Priorities may also be established based upon the nature and type of information. For example, a document which addresses life-threatening issues such as carbon monoxide poisoning or immunization is identified as a priority for translation. The length of a document should also be taken into consideration; for many documents a summary is appropriate.

b. Arranging for the delivery of service in other languages

- The delivery of multilingual services requires sound judgment and decision making in ascertaining how interpretation and translation needs can be met in the most effective manner as applicable to all legislative requirements and service delivery accessibility standards.
- SHCHC establishes lists of employees who speak other languages and who are willing to provide an informal interpretation service to help overcome language barriers in the delivery of client service.

- SHCHC establishes and maintains a list of key interpretation service organizations that is founded on the principle and operational ability that effective communication is crucial to ensuring quality and access to primary health care, and that appropriate interpreting services in the delivery of health care reduces language barriers, thus creating more equitable access to quality health care services for patients with limited English and/or French proficiency (LEP/LFP).
- SHCHC is involved in working with interpreters trained to practice in the primary health care sector. The aim is to improve quality of service as a result of accurate transmission of messages to patients with LEP/LFP, ultimately reducing risk and liability, and facilitating coordination and integration with other health services.

Arranging for the delivery of service for Clients with Sensory Impairments

The delivery of services for clients with sensory impairments requires sound judgment and decision-making in determining how interpretation and translation needs can be met in the most effective manner as applicable to all legislative requirements and service delivery accessibility standards.

- A list of employees will be established who are willing to provide an informal sign language interpretation service to help overcome sensory impairment barriers in the delivery of client service.
- SHCHC establishes and maintains a list of key interpretation service organizations that is founded on the principle and operational ability that effective communication is crucial to ensuring quality and access to primary health care, and that appropriate interpreting services in the delivery of health care reduces language barriers, thus creating more equitable access to quality health care services for clients with sensory impairments.
- SHCHC is involved in working with interpreters trained to practice in the primary health care sector. The aim is to improve quality of service as a result of accurate transmission of messages to clients with sensory impairments, ultimately reducing risk and liability, and facilitating coordination and integration with other health services.

Reasonable effort

SHCHC will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities. SHCHC defines reasonable efforts as providing the best possible service within the context of: available resources, balancing the needs of people with disabilities with others who may encounter barriers to access and with the community at large and the health and safety of SHCHC service providers.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Sandy Hill Community Health Centre (SHCHC) is committed to provide to individuals with a disability equal opportunity to access and use goods and services. These goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects their dignity and independence and in a way that allows the individual with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other SHCHC clients, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable access. The accessibility needs of a person with disabilities will be met in a timely manner.

This commitment is consistent with SHCHC's mission to deliver services in a welcoming and supportive environment and with its core values of equity, accessibility, diversity and fairness in the treatment of all individuals.

The SHCHC strives to meet or exceed the standards set out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its regulations, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 and the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11. The Centre will develop and implement accessibility policies and programs that adhere to these standards and that are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity, as set out in the Acts. These documents will be in writing, available to the public (in an accessible format, upon request) and updated on a regular basis.

RELEVANT POLICIES/DOCUMENTS:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, Chapter 11.
 - Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter H.19.
 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards.
 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Services.
 - Access ON, A Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, July 2012.
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