

100- ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

ACC 101 PREAMBLES

This Policy has been established pursuant to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). Our dental office will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Respecting the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- Integrating the provision of dental services to persons with disabilities, unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable use or benefit from dental services available in our dental office;
- Giving persons with disabilities an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the dental services available in our dental office.

Definitions

Dignity - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

Independence - when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as others, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity - service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods or services equal to that given to others.

Definitions for other key terms used in this document appear in Appendix "B".

ACC 102 PATIENT SERVICE: PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

1. Our Mission

Our office is dedicated to the provision of exemplary oral health care to the patients we serve.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, our dental office strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, if possible, and in a similar way as other patients of our office. If needed, we will work with persons with disabilities to assist them in identifying alternative means to access dental services.

3. Providing Service to People with Disabilities

We are committed to excellence in serving all patients, their families and care givers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

3.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train staff who communicate with patients and others on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.2 Telephone Services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to patients and their families. We will train staff to communicate over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. If we are advised that telephone communication is not suitable to a particular individual, we will aim to provide the needed accommodation.

3.3 Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, to use or benefit from our dental services. We will ensure that our staff members are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing our services.

3.4 Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our patients. For this reason, invoices will be provided in alternate formats upon request. We will answer any questions about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email, in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law, in which case, steps will be taken to ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to access dental services. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with patients, their families and others, are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal. An animal is a service animal 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 a letter from a physician or nurse, in accordance with Section 4 of the AODA.

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 our dental office with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises. Support persons will be asked to agree to maintain privacy and confidentiality of personal information related to the provision of dental care services provided to patients, in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

5. Notice of Temporary Disruption

If our dental office relies upon particular equipment, devices, facilities or services in order to provide dental services to persons with disabilities we will provide details in Appendix "A" of this Policy. In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the use of such equipment, devices, facilities or services, we will provide notice which 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 all entrances and service counters on our premises. The notice will be given in accordance with requirements under section 5 of the AODA.

6. Training for Staff

We will provide training to all employees, independent contractors, agents, volunteers and others who work with us and on our behalf, with a view to ensuring that they are familiarized with our policies, practices and procedures for providing persons with disabilities and their families with dental services. This training will be provided to existing staff at the time this Policy is implemented; for new staff, when they commence their duties; and for all staff on an on-going basis. Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the regulations and accessibility standards established under the Act;
- 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, devices, services and/or facilities currently available on our premises or through our office, if any (and described more fully in Appendix “A” to this Policy where applicable) to help people with disabilities who obtain dental services from our office;
- How to locate and implement our office’s policies, practices and procedures on accessibility standards;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing our dental services;
- How to obtain additional information on assisting people with disabilities, available through Ontario’s Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Accessibility Directorate Website: www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/.

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

7. Feedback Process

Our ultimate goal is to meet and surpass patient expectations while serving people with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way our dental office provides services to people with disabilities can be brought directly to the attention of the office manager by any method (e.g. in person, telephone, email, in writing, etc.).

If you have a complaint regarding accessibility we ask that you speak with the office manager directly. Everyone in this office is committed to working with you to resolve your concerns.

8. Modifications to This or Other Policies

We are committed to developing office policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. No changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. We will modify or remove any office policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

9. Questions about This Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to people with disabilities who seek dental services through our dental office. If anyone has a question about this policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided, or you should be referred to the general manager.

10. Dental Offices with At Least 20 Employees in Ontario

It is acknowledged that any dental office with at least 20 employees in Ontario has additional obligations under the AODA in that it must:

- Self evaluate and certify their compliance with the accessibility standard for patient service by completing and filing an annual accessibility report with the Government of Ontario;
- Prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures, including those relating to service animals, temporary service disruptions, training and other issues; and upon request provide a copy of such documentation to any person;
- Prepare a document describing its training policy, a summary of the contents of the training, details of when the training is to be provided, the dates actually provided, and number of individuals to whom it was provided; and,
- Notify persons to whom it provides dental services that documents required by regulations under the AODA are available upon request, and such notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises, on the provider's website, or by other method that is reasonable in the circumstances.

These additional obligations as outlined in this item (Item 10):

- apply to our dental office
- do not apply to our dental office

Date on which this Policy has been put into effect: January 1st, 2012.

In this Appendix, we address what equipment, devices, services and/or facilities are currently available through our office and on our premises to help people with disabilities to communicate with us and to obtain dental services from our office:

- We have the following personal assistive devices (PADs) available for use in our office: 1 wheelchair, bathrooms are wheelchair accessible equipped with supportive bars, and oxygen tanks.
- We serve patients who use personal assistive devices (PADs) by; being wheelchair accessible, having an elevator in the building, and promoting the use of service animals
- Our office will take the subsequent assistive measures to make the following available to offer people with disabilities: We will communicate through TTY if necessary and we will communicate through designated support persons.
- We will refer patients to have treatment in a hospital setting if we are not able/equipped to handle their requirements at this location.
- We learn from our patients directly on how it is best to communicate with them and/or their designated representative and how to accommodate their disability; we will discuss what the patients needs are with the patient or support worker on how best to communicate with the patient.
- It is our standard practice to describe to patients any information posted if they are unable to read a sign by verbally communicate with them.
- For patients who are deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing; We will subscribe to TTY at 613-580-2401
- Upon being informed of a person who lip reads we will commit to facing the patient directly and speaking at a readable pace as directed by the patient.
- All of our operatories are equipped with paper and pens to be available to communicate through note writing.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

- We will strive to communicate to the patient at a level that they will be able to comprehend using laymen's terms.

In this Appendix, we provide definitions for key terms which appear in the document:

An **Assistive Device**¹ 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.

Barrier² means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Disability³ means:

- a) 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;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a development disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or,
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

A **Guide Dog**⁴ means a dog that has been trained as a guide for a blind person at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*.

An animal is a **Service Animal**⁵ 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 has a letter from a physician or nurse verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to his or her disability.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

A **Support Person**⁶ is an individual hired or chosen to accompany a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods or services.