

## **Accessible Customer Service Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

This policy is designed to meet the standards and act in accordance with Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). These standards were developed to identify, remove and prevent barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas of information and communications and employment. The Customer Service Standard is the first of the Standards under the AODA. The mandate of the Standard is that all obligated organizations must take measures to provide accessible service to all customers, including customers with all types of disabilities.

### **Purpose**

Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital Foundation ("the Foundation") is committed to provide goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The Foundation is also committed to ensuring our employees are educated and adhere to this policy. The Foundation will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all people are treated and provided customer service in a manner that is consistent with the principles of the AODA: Dignity, Independence, Equal opportunity and Integration.

### **POLICY**

#### Customer Service and Communication

The Foundation will ensure that positive customer service and communication is provided to all persons with a disability by adhering to the following:

- Make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities will be integrated into regular practice.
- Offer and provide alternative measures and/or formats if necessary when requested by an individual with a disability.
- Ensure that, to the extent possible, accessible goods and services are delivered in a timely manner.
- All communication shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

#### Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may require the use of their own assistive devices to access services or goods. An assistive device is any device that is used, designed, made or adapted to assist people in performing a particular task. The Foundation will take all reasonable measures to ensure goods and services are accessible to persons using assistive devices, including training employees in how best to assist a customer using an assistive device.

In the case the use of an assistive device poses a further challenge to the accessibility of goods and services or raises a potential safety concern, all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the individual, which may include using an alternative assistive device or providing the same service in a different manner.

### Service Animals

The Foundation is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. We will ensure that all staff who deal with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

The following terms apply to a person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal:

- In the event a particular service animal is not allowed by law on or in a particular area of the premises, all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the individual, which may include an alternative form of assistance or providing the same service in a different manner.
- In the event of a valid health & safety issue, all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the individual, which may include an alternative form of assistance or providing the same service in a different manner.
- In the case of service dogs, the law allows them to accompany their owner to go where food is served, sold or offered for sale. The law also states service dogs are not allowed in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed or handled.
- The owner is responsible for maintaining control of the animal at all times.

### Support Persons

The Foundation is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

The following terms apply to a person with a disability who is accompanied by support person:

- The Foundation may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on the premises in situations where it is necessary due to health and safety concerns.
- Consent from the person with a disability is required when communicating confidential issues related to the person with a disability, in the presence of a support person.
- If a fee is charged for the admission of a support person, the fee will be communicated and posted.

### **Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

The Foundation will publicly notify customers of temporary disruptions of services or facilities. If the disruption is planned the organization will publicly notify customers of the upcoming service disruption in advance of the start of the service disruption.

#### **A notice of temporary disruption will include:**

- When the disruption will happen if it is a case where it is planned;
- Steps to take to access alternative methods;
- A description of alternative facilities or services if they are available;
- The reason for the disruption; and
- How long the disruption will last.

The notice may be delivered to the public by the following methods:

- Posting at the main entrances and the source of the disruption;
- Via phone and email notification to regular customers or customers with scheduled appointments;
- The company's website.

### **Feedback Process**

A feedback process regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities has been established. The manner in which feedback may be provided will be in such a way that best suits the person with a disability.

The Foundation will review all feedback received and respond in a timely manner. If the feedback is of a serious concern a response to the person submitting the complaint will be issued as soon as reasonably possible.

### Training

The Foundation will ensure that all employees and applicable third parties who interact with customers are provided with AODA Customer Service Standard Training. Training will also be required for those individuals who are involved in the development or implementation of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

The trained will address:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005;
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;
- Information about Company policies and procedures (including this policy);
- Best practice how to communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- Best practice how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices, require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.

The Foundation will retain a record of all individuals who have completed the required training.

### Notice of Availability of Documents and Alternative Formats

The Foundation will post notice of the availability of this policy, other documents prescribed by the Standard and the availability of alternative formats upon request. This information will be provided in our Statement of Commitment which is posted at a conspicuous location for customers, as well on the company's website.