

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY FOR



PREAMBLE

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".

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.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

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

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

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.mcscs.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 Dr. Yolanda Cruz or 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 Dr. Yolanda Cruz or 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

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

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 office 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

Appendix “A”

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:

- The personal assistive devices (PADs) used and or available for use in our office, if any;
Oxygen Tank

- How we will serve patients who use personal assistive devices (PADs) to access our dental services;

We accommodate patients who use assistive devices by asking them permission to help them and to let us know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

The Sheraton Centre Hotel is a wheelchair accessible building including main entrance located at 123 Queen Street West (Main hotel entrance).

Our clinic is located on the 4th floor of the Richmond Tower, which is accessible by Elevators. Smaller washrooms are located on this floor. If these washrooms are an accessibility issue, **Wheelchair accessible washrooms** are available on the Concourse Level of the Sheraton Hotel.

- What - if any - assistive measures that our office will make available and/or offer to people with disabilities;

Our office has a consultation room where treatment can be discussed in private. Visual aids such as pictures, diagrams, pamphlets and computers are used to help describe treatment plans to patients.

- How services may be made available in another location, if it is not possible to provide service within the office itself;

We will offer recommendations for referral to another location to accommodate the patient needs with respect to access. We will facilitate the transfer and make arrangement for their initial visit if necessary.

- How we can 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 are always open to learn how to best communicate and how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

- How it is our standard practice to describe to patients any information posted if they are unable to read a sign;

It is our standard of practice to describe any posted information if they are unable to read a sign.

- What telephone services may be made available for patients who are deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing;

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Our office use Bell Relay Services when necessary.

Bell Relay service TTY users: Dial 711

Bell Relay service call for voice users: Dial 1 800 855-0511

For more information regarding how to use this service, please visit

http://www.bell.ca/Accessibility_services/Bell_Relay_service

- How we will establish practices to communicate with patients who rely on lip reading;

Our staff is trained to speak clearly and precise and repeat or rephrase if necessary and to make sure they have been understood.

- How we will make note paper and pen available to communicate through note writing;

We will try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.

- How we will establish a practice to communicate in plain language to avoid technical language with people who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability;

We will use diagrams, brochures and pictures to communicate information when necessary. We will speak normally and clearly and directly to our patients.

Appendix “B”

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.

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.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service: training tips for employees* (Online). Available: www.Ontario.ca/AccessON [December 1, 2011].

² *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, S.O. 2005, c. 11*.

³ *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c H. 19*.

⁴ Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. *Accessibility Standard for Customer Services: training resource* (Online). Available: www.Ontario.ca/AccessON [December 1, 2011].

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.