

# **Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences**

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

### **Legislative Background**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a provincial law in Ontario that seeks to provide a pathway to achieve a province that is fully accessible by 2025. This legislation provides a framework toward which organizations can build workplaces and services that are accessible to staff, clients and visitors regardless of their ability and it provides for the participation of people with disabilities in assisting with barrier identification and removal.

In 2016, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Regulation 191/11, incorporated the AODA framework and subsequent focus group and sub-committee recommendations into one document. The IASR established key deliverables required to assist with achieving accessibility. Standards for Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces, as well as specific criteria that affect procurement and Training are included as part of the IASR.

All Ontario organizations have requirements that must be met and specific timelines to achieve their implementation with the goal of providing an accessible Ontario by 2025.

In addition, organizations must develop multi-year plans that support ongoing barrier identification and removal as well as promote continuous improvement. The plan must be publicly available and identify and promote work in the areas of Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Training, Procurement, including Self-Service kiosks, Design of Public Space and other relevant initiatives that enhance accessibility.

### **Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences**

Ontario Shores has a tradition of providing mental health care that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion. We apply those same principles towards accessibility to ensure all patients, staff, families and visitors feel accepted and included.

### **Statement of Commitment**

Ontario Shores is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA.

### **The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

Ontario Shores will continue to fulfill our obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This document outlines the steps we have taken and actions we will continue to take in order to uphold legislative requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

### Establishment of Accessibility Policies

Every obligated organization must develop, implement and maintain policies on how it achieves accessibility and meets requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation.

Ontario Shores has a comprehensive Accessibility Policy that is publicly available, posted on our external website and is available in alternate formats, upon request. This policy defines how accessibility is embedded in our organization and our barrier identification and removal process.

This policy is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of all legislation including the Human Rights Code.

### Establishment of Accessibility Plans

Organizations are required to establish, document and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines its strategy to prevent and remove barriers as well as meet the requirements of the AODA and IASR.

As identified in previous Multi-Year Plan postings, Ontario Shores conducted audits of its facilities, policies and practices with the participation of people with disabilities in order to identify barriers and implement strategies to reduce or remove them. These items were documented in previous plans which also tracked progress on implementation.

We identified the criteria of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR). We documented our strategies to achieve these standards and implemented the requirements within the directed time parameters.

Ongoing, Ontario Shores will continue to enhance and provide oversight of organizational strategies to continue to prevent and remove barriers to ensure we continue to meet all requirements the AODA and IASR.

We will do so by:

- Engaging stakeholders in future Accessibility Plan development;
- Continuing to identify barriers by soliciting and welcoming feedback from employees, clients, visitors and Patient and Family advisors;
- Adopting Co-Design strategies when developing and establishing corporate strategies, projects and initiatives to ensure that accessibility is embedded in organizational structures;
- Providing a recruitment and retention environment that supports people of all abilities throughout the employment lifecycle; and
- Ensuring that when a concern regarding accessibility is presented, Ontario Shores enacts its review process by engaging with the impacted person(s) to discuss potential solutions to remove the barrier. Should the solution require resources that are not immediately available we will endeavour to address the concern through our Annual Accessibility Plan. Interim solutions will be sought in

consultation with the person(s) affected and they will be updated on the implementation strategy.

### Customer Service

At Ontario Shores we pride ourselves on the delivery of service we provide. As a Mental Health Care Provider, we engage and provide service to people with disabilities as our core business. We are committed to ensuring we deliver goods and services that are accessible.

We have demonstrated our commitment in our Accessibility Policy, in our Accessibility Training and our ongoing work to enhance Mental Health Services and reduce stigma.

We offer Peer Support and have a dedicated Patient and Family Advisor. Our active Family Council is a key stakeholder in many of our initiatives.

In 2023 Ontario Shores has committed to Action Plans which may enhance accessibility. Examples include Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan, Outpatient Services Delivery Models Review, Quality Improvement Wait-list Management and Alternate Level of Care processes. When specific actions are identified they will be detailed in our Annual report and where appropriate future Accessibility Plans.

### Accessible Information

Ontario Shores is committed to providing publicly available emergency information in an accessible format, upon request. General Information is posted in our public spaces.

Our Notification of Disruption of Service protocols supports communication of key services and emergency systems that may be unavailable.

We also provide individualized emergency response information to employees with disabilities when appropriate. Please see the Government of Ontario's document "How to provide Accessible Information to Staff" for more detail on Emergency Information.

### Training

Ontario Shores has established training on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. This training is provided to all staff, volunteers and third parties that interact on our behalf and is provided as soon as is practicable. Records of this training are maintained. This is provided predominantly in an online learning module, and is available in other formats as necessary.

We provide the training during our orientation process and ongoing to ensure that staff are refreshed on service delivery practices and re-engaged in our barrier identification and removal process.

In 2022 we launched a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan which we anticipate will result in enhanced customer service related training. Further details will be shared in upcoming Annual Reports and if appropriate our next Accessibility Plan.

## Information and Communication

Ontario Shores is committed to providing communication that meets the needs of people with disabilities and will consult with them to determine their information and communication needs.

Public information will be available in alternate formats and our commitment to providing accessibility will be identified in our public documents.

To ensure our communication meets accessibility needs, our internet website and content conform to World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA, with exceptions as permitted.

We provide a feedback mechanism that is available via different channels, including by telephone, email, written or in person. This feedback mechanism is available to staff, clients, students, volunteers, family members and all who visit our organization.

With the launch of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action plan we anticipate that changes or enhancements may be identified. These will be documented in our Annual Reporting process.

## Employment

Ontario Shores is committed to fair and equitable employment practices.

As noted earlier, Ontario Shores has embedded accessibility into the employment lifecycle via policies that address Recruitment and Selection as well as Workplace Accommodation.

Accommodation will:

- Involve the employee in the development of their plan;
- Protect the privacy of the person;
- Communicate with the employee, including providing context if a plan is denied;
- Provide plans in accessible formats as appropriate;
- Review plans as appropriate, taking into account whether the disability is temporary, recurring or permanent; and
- Ensure performance management is provided in a way that meets the needs of the employee; specific measures or actions will be included in their accommodation plan.

Ongoing we will continue to review our policies and process to ensure we meet legislation requirements.

Currently we are in the process of implementing a new Human Resources Management Information System which may impact personal accommodation plans and other area of accessibility, such as Training and Communication and Information.

We also have Action Plans in development to address Retention, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, and Quality Standards which may impact our employment policies and practise.

Any actions or items identified will be documented in our Annual Report and updated as necessary in subsequent Multi-year Plans.

## Procurement, Design of Public Spaces

Our procurement process incorporates accessibility as a requirement in purchasing of goods and services. This function may affect purchase of specific items, such as furniture or technology or reflect changes to our built environment. Should a purchase not meet accessibility recommendations or requirements, documentation as to why, within the parameters of risk or undue hardship, will be provided.

Ontario Shores will adopt the Design for Public Spaces Accessibility Standards when building or making modification to public spaces such as:

- Outdoor paths of travel;
- Service related elements such as service counters, waiting areas; and
- Service kiosks.

We will implement procedures to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces and where unable to do so will put into practice plans to minimize the impact or provide other supports.

When our offsite location had an interruption to their servicing elevator, Our Geriatric Outpatient Services as well as other clients or staff requiring accommodate were relocated to our Main Site which was able to support the identified accommodation.

We have included accessible picnic tables in our public spaces, provided accessible seating in our waiting areas and increased the number of accessible parking spaces.

We have provided tactile strips to promote accessibility, ensured our building entrances are accessible and have adopted measures to reduce barriers in existing service kiosks.

We have identified opportunities to enhance our outdoor paths of travel which will be detailed in future plans and annual reporting.

Ontario Shores has permanently funded a Geriatric Transitional Unit which will assist acute hospitals with options for Alternate Level of Care clients. We will be reviewing Senior Friendly Design documentation which may result in changes to the physical space of our Geriatric units.

Our Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan includes completing a new environmental scan of physical space and policies. Should there be changes recommended or actioned these will be detailed in further Plans and our Annual Report.

## Closing Statements

In accordance with the AODA, this multi-year Plan will be posted on the Ontario Shores website and shall be reviewed and updated at least every 5 years.

The plan will consult with people with disabilities and be supplemented by an Annual Status Report, also posted on our website.

If you have any questions or want to provide feedback on this document please connect with us at [feedback@ontarioshores.ca](mailto:feedback@ontarioshores.ca) or contact us by calling our Quality and Patient Experience Team at Ext. 6703.