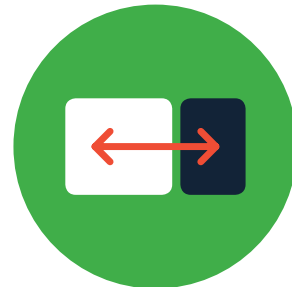




Peterborough Regional Health Centre Accessibility Plan



Introduction

This 2023-2028 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Making our information, programs and services accessible to all patients, visitors and staff is our legal responsibility and our ethical obligation as healthcare professionals. Our goal is to ensure we are in compliance with all required legislation, and where possible, ensure we exceed those requirements.

Only by working together to learn, understand and comply with our responsibilities and continually challenging ourselves to find new and better ways to support accessibility will we be able to provide equal access to high quality, patient and family-centred care for the people of our community and our region.

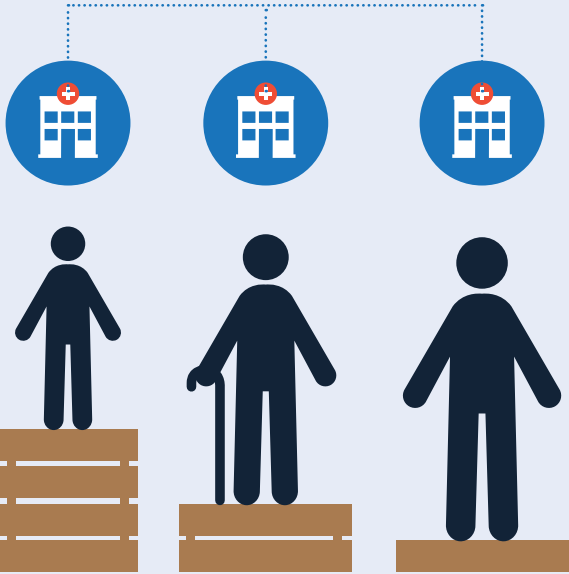
Statement of Commitment

PRHC is committed to the ongoing identification, prevention and removal of barriers to persons with disabilities. A barrier is anything that makes it challenging or impossible for a person with a disability to access a service, program or a building.

This could include:

- A physical barrier, such as a feature of a building or outdoor space that presents a challenge for a person with a physical disability;
- An information or communication barrier that would make it difficult for a person to easily understand information, such as print that is too small to read; or
- A technological barrier, such as a website that does not support screen-reading software.

Equity



This image shows three people standing on different platform levels, making them all the same height. Each person has the height they need to access healthcare services. This is a visual representation of health equity. Different allocation of resources are required so that each person can achieve a positive health outcomes.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan is created in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Plan is a multi-year document spanning five (5) years and will be reviewed and updated annually as necessary.

In 2005, the government of Ontario passed the AODA, which requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025. To help public, private and non-profit organizations identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, the AODA outlines accessibility standards in a number of areas, including:

- Customer service
- Information and communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- The built environment

The accessibility standard for customer service came into force in 2008. The next three (3) standards – information and communications, employment and transportation – have been combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR is now law. The standards for the built environment, for facilities and outdoor spaces, are still in development.

Status of Accessibility Legislation in Ontario

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

In 2001, the provincial government enacted the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). This Act required organizations within the public sector (the provincial government, municipalities, hospitals, educational institutions and public transportation providers) to undertake activities aimed at reducing and eliminating barriers to persons with disabilities.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

In 2005, the provincial government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The AODA requires the development of accessibility standards in five (5) areas: customer service; information and communications; employment; transportation and the built environment.

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The first regulation enacted under the AODA was Ontario Regulation 429-07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. Designated public sector organizations were to be in compliance by January 1, 2010 and submit a compliance report to the provincial government by March 31, 2010. PRHC submitted its compliance report in advance of the deadline, indicating it had addressed the requirements of the regulation and had met its compliance obligations.

Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)

Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)

The IASR was enacted in July 2011. It includes a number of general and specific accessibility requirements in the areas of information and communications, employment and transportation. The requirements have compliance dates ranging from when the IASR was enacted (July 2011) to the year 2021. The requirements apply to the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

The sections of the IASR that most impact PRHC are related to accessible information and communications, and employment. As PRHC is not a provider of public transit, the transportation requirements do not apply.

The categories and requirements addressed in the regulation (except those related to accessible transportation) are summarized to the right.

General Requirements

- Development of an integrated accessibility standards policy;
- Development of a multi-year accessibility plan;
- Annual reporting on the progress of the multi-year accessibility plan;
- Training staff and volunteers on the requirements of the regulation and the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it pertains to people with disabilities; and,
- Ensuring that accessibility considerations and features are reflected in procurement processes.

Information and Communications

Organizations are required to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. The specific requirements include the following:

- Ensuring that feedback processes are accessible, upon request;
- Providing accessible formats and communication supports, upon request;
- Providing publicly available emergency procedure, plans or public safety information in accessible formats, upon request; and,
- Improving the accessibility of websites and web content.

Employment

Employers are required to provide accessibility across all stages of the employment cycle and integrate accessibility into regular workplace processes. The specific requirements include the following:

- Notifying employees and the public of the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in recruitment and assessment processes;
- Notifying successful applicants of the availability of accommodations;
- Informing employees of policies to provide support to employees with disabilities;
- Providing accessible formats and communication supports for employees with disabilities;

- Providing workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities;
- Establishing processes to develop documented individual accommodation plans;
- Developing a return-to-work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability or who require disability-related accommodations to return to work; and,
- Considering the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and accommodation plans in performance management processes, when providing career development opportunities or when considering redeployment.

Training

PRHC provides necessary training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario’s accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best aligns with the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members with the needs of persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility Working Group

The Health Centre has an Accessibility Working Group in place to support us in complying with the AODA, established by the Government of Ontario in 2005. This working group, made up of PRHC leaders and staff, works to champion the PRHC Accessibility Plan by promoting accessibility education and initiatives, as well as identifying and eliminating barriers for the benefit of patients, visitors and staff.

PRHC’s Accessibility Working Group was established in 2002. Membership includes an executive sponsor and representatives from:

- Human Resources
- Volunteer Services
- Direct patient care services
- Patient Relations
- Communications
- Occupational Health, Safety & Wellness
- Building Services
- Procurement
- Our community (Patient/Family)

The Accessibility Working Group conducts its functions under the following assumptions:

- Improving accessibility is a shared responsibility
- Team members will work cohesively and will inform their immediate supervisors regarding their commitment and the work effort to participate on the team
- Team members will provide active communication and liaison between the accessibility team and their hospital unit/department or community constituency
- Development of the PRHC accessibility plan is mandated by the AODA, 2005 and is strongly supported by senior levels of administration at PRHC.

The working group welcomes input from people with disabilities and other individuals who are willing to provide their feedback regarding issues they have identified during their visits to PRHC.

Please contact us by email at: patientr@prhc.on.ca

Barrier-Identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Working Group has used the following barrier-identification methodologies to identify issues and to create annual priorities for the Accessibility Plan.

- Retrospective post-discharge phone call audits
- Staff feedback using survey data and Impact reports
- Website feedback via patientr@prhc.on.ca email address
- Community stakeholder consultations
- Periodic review of advances in accessibility-related products and/or trends

Identified Barriers

The Accessibility Working Group continues to address barriers each year. The group continues to look at alternative ways to ensure persons with disabilities are not faced with barriers. Identified barriers include:

- Physical
- Informational
- Attitudinal
- Architectural
- Communication
- Technological

Work has been done to remove identified barriers including:

- Large, wide hallways free of clutter to allow easy movement
- Large buttons and voiceover on the elevators
- Door paddles
- Wayfinding plan
- Braille on wayfinding signs
- Wheelchairs and staxis available at the main entrance

- Wheelchairs and staxis available at the main entrance
- Accessible public washrooms on all levels
- TTY phones are available in two (2) locations
- Parking improvements
- Education to staff regarding tools available to assist persons with disabilities
- Review of interpreter policy
- Brochure created for staff to assist them in providing accessible customer service

Our Actions to Achieve Excellence in Accessibility

This Annual Status Report outlines our progress on actions taken to meet the requirements of the AODA. At PRHC, we are committed to ensuring that staff, physicians, volunteers, visitors, and patients have access to services in ways that respect an individual’s independence and dignity.

Accessibility-related initiatives:

Accessibility Services at PRHC – awareness campaign

PRHC undertook a two-pronged accessibility awareness campaign in 2023.

Part 1: Staff and volunteers

- The Accessibility Working Group took stock of all accessibility accommodations and services that could improve the PRHC experience.
- We found any gaps and ensured floors were stocked with items.

- We created an intranet site that all staff and volunteers could access that included sections on different accessibility accommodations, broken down by impairment categories. This included where the stock is stored, how to get more, information/resources on each impairment, and PRHC contact information.
- Executed a corporate communications blitz during National Accessibility Week. This included emails and posters outlining our plan to make PRHC more accessible and inclusive for all.

Part 2: Public awareness

This campaign focused on encouraging patients and their loved ones to advocate for accessibility improvements. Using a visual with two (2) scenarios of equality vs. equity, we hoped to illustrate that the implementation of one versus the other can lead to dramatically different outcomes for people with accessibility needs. Our hope is to show that the implementation of one versus the

other can lead to dramatically different outcomes for people with accessibility needs.

This graphic was put up in public spaces throughout PRHC, on our public website and is shared regularly over our owned social media channels.

- PRHC makes regular updates to the accessibility section of the website. This includes a list of accessibility supports and services available and how to ask for support, if needed.
<https://www.prhc.on.ca/about-us/accessibility/>

Barrier-free access to services

The AODA requires organizations to participate in ensuring barrier-free access to services. In 2022, PRHC established an organizational Health Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (HEDI), led by PRHC’s Vice President, Clinical Services, Quality and Health Equity and the Director, Collaborative Practice, Clinical Informatics, and Patient Flow. The Accessibility committee and leadership members are stewards of and will be accountable for the AODA compliance program to ensure PRHC meets its HEDI mandate and includes all those who need barrier free access to participate in our organization.

PRHC’s patient and visitor handbook.

PRHC strives to ensure that patients and their support people with disabilities can easily find what healthcare services are available and how and where to access them. PRHC recently completed a major revision to the patient and visitor handbook, taking special consideration to ensure the content was accessible and available online, in print, and in alternative formats upon request.

Ensuring all healthcare services are reachable by accessible public transit routes and have accessible parking.

Accessibility is always considered when any change is made to entrances, exits, and ensuring sufficient accessible parking spaces, and accessible access are always available.

Accessibility improvements to physical spaces.

PRHC is committed to ensuring our physical space is accessible. This includes continuing to install compact JumpSeat chairs in long hallways so patients and visitors can have a rest when needed and ensuring public access doorways have enter/exit automated doors. In 2022, two stryker TC wheelchairs were purchased and were distributed to volunteer services to support accessible patient transport. Other physical accommodations include, stretchers, adaptive call bells, adaptive dressing aids, long handled reaching aid, shoehorns sock aids, breastfeeding room, and stationary transfer poles.

A committed Accessibility Working Group that meets monthly.

This group at PRHC includes a patient relations representative, employees in different healthcare and administrative roles across the hospital and a patient and family representative to bring an important patient perspective to the group. The group ensures there is a forum to improve accessibility and has an ongoing agenda of accessibility challenges, resolutions and goals for improvement.

Mandatory accessibility training for all employees and new hires.

PRHC mandates all new hires to undergo web-based e-learning accessibility training, and all other individuals are required to complete a web-based training module at minimum, every two (2) years.

Next Steps

Throughout 2023 and onwards, the Accessibility Working Group will focus on:

- Reviewing and expanding membership where necessary; including securing a full-time patient/family representative to advocate a patient and family voice
- Enhancing communication and information-sharing with PRHC employees, volunteers and physicians
- Establishing relationships with community partners on community-based Accessibility Groups
- Meeting the requirements of the IASR associated with training and accessible communication
- Developing an annual update on the multi-year accessibility plan
- Reviewing existing accessibility procedures and updating them as required
- Supporting building projects, such as the plan to establish a fully accessible washroom on every floor
- Piloting accessibility-focused initiatives

Review and Monitoring Process

The Accessibility Working Group will meet a minimum of eight (8) times annually. According to the Terms of Reference, the Accessibility Working Group functions to:

- Raise awareness of accessibility at PRHC and facilitate identification of barriers to access by persons with disabilities
- Provide information and act as a resource to staff on issues related to accessibility for persons with disabilities
- Advocate for and recommend actions to prevent, reduce, and eliminate access barriers
- Prepare the annual Accessibility Plan as required by the new Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005
- Monitor access for disabled persons within the hospital, in partnership with risk management
- Audit accessibility measures to ensure sustained access

The Accessibility Working Group is responsible for monitoring and following up on recommendations identified in the annual Accessibility Plan. The Accessibility Working Group will also receive and review responses to complaints related to accessibility on a quarterly basis, and make recommendations for future action.

Communication of the Plan

The PRHC Accessibility Plan will be posted on the hospital website and the employee intranet. Hard copies will be available through Patient Relations. On request, the plan can be made available in alternative formats, such as computer disk in electronic text, large print, or in braille.

Feedback from Public

PRHC strives to meet and exceed the customer service standards and provide patient and family centred care to people with disabilities. A wide variety of options are currently available for people to provide feedback on accessibility at PRHC. Feedback is welcomed and appreciated in a variety of formats, including but not limited to:

- Patient Relations office – Room W4876
- Contacting us through our website and/or social media
- Patient satisfaction survey

Accessibility related comment forms are reviewed by Patient Relations to increase visibility.

We actively solicit feedback on accessibility through our Patient & Family Advisory Councils. Patient satisfaction surveys will include information on how to participate using methods other than the written form. Review existing brochures/pamphlets and identify where accessibility feedback could be increased.

We are using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to identify comments from patient experience surveys that either relate to Accessibility (as defined by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act) or indicate non-compliance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. AI is being used safely in in compliance with PRHC’s 1.C.160 Acceptable AI Use Policy.

Where information is publicly available and upon request, it will be provided in an accessible format.

For more information, please contact:
PRHC Patient Relations
705-741-2121 x.3674
patientr@prhc.on.ca

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request.

PRHC

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