

Appendix 1

Accessibility Working Group

Terms of Reference

(under review)

Purpose:

The LHSC Accessibility Working Group is responsible to prepare an annual accessibility plan for identifying, removing and preventing barriers to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities across the hospital.

Definitions:

Disability:

- 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,
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

(Source: Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001)

Barrier:

- 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 informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

(Source: Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001)

Objectives:

- Develop measures to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.
- Report on the measures in place to ensure that the organization assesses its proposals for by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- List the by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services that the organization will review in the coming year in order to identify barriers to persons with disabilities.
- Report on the measures that the organization intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.

Duties:

- Review recent initiatives and successes in identifying, removing and preventing barriers.
- Identify barriers that may be addressed in the coming year.
- Set priorities and develop strategies to address barrier removal and prevention.
- Specify how and when progress is to be monitored.
- Write, approve, endorse, submit, publish and communicate the plan.
- Review and monitor the plan.

Membership:

Each member brings his or her special expertise, experience and commitment to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities. Each member does not represent the concerns of only one disability or group. All members of the committee will work together to develop a common approach that is reasonable and practical.

The Accessibility Working Group may form sub-committees as necessary to address specific issues. These sub-committees will draw upon members of the Accessibility Working Group as well as resource people from within or outside the hospital as deemed necessary.

The Accessibility Working Committee will appoint a Coordinator. The Coordinator will be responsible for co-ordinating and developing the plan and should have an understanding of:

- The organization's facilities, by-laws, legislation, policies, programs, practices and services.
- The range of access issues people with disabilities live with every day.
- The organization's annual business and capital planning cycles.

Guidelines:

There is a general guide to accessibility planning under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. The current guide can be found on the Internet at the following address:

http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/planning_information.htm

The Ontario Hospital Association with the help of many of its members has created a Toolkit for Annual Accessibility Planning under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The toolkit is used as a guide to create the accessibility plan.

Accountability:

The Accessibility Working Group will report to a Citywide Steering Committee consisting of members from both LHSC and St. Joseph's. All initiatives to identify and remove barriers will then be reported to the Joint Senior Leadership Team; final approval of the plan is given by the Board of each hospital.

Frequency of meetings:

The Accessibility Working Group will meet monthly, or at the discretion of the Coordinator.

Deliverables:

By Sept. 30 of each year, an accessibility plan must be drafted.