



Policy: Customer Service Policy

Version No. : 1	Policy Owner:	Department:
Effective Date: 2012/01/01	Approval Authority:	Next Revision Date: YYYY/MM/DD

PURPOSE

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was introduced to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. Under this Act, Ontario is introducing mandatory accessibility standards. The first of these accessibility standards governs the provision of goods and services. All people and organizations with at least one employee that provide goods and services to people in Ontario will be required to comply with these standards by January 1, 2012.

The purpose of the policy is to govern CIHI's compliance with new accessibility standards being introduced under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. It provides guidelines for delivering goods and services to people with disabilities in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service regulation under the AODA (**Regulation 429/07**).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all CIHI staff including contract employees, students and external consultants.

DEFINITIONS

Disability 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 developmental 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.

Service Animals

In the majority of cases service animals will be dogs. Service animals offer a variety of assistance including acting as a travel guide, carrying cargo, fetching products, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, pulling wheelchairs, providing additional support to avoid falls, warning the customer of an impending seizure or needed medication, protecting the customer in medical situations, calling 911, turning on lights, getting help and reducing panic and fear. Typically guide dogs, service animals or service dogs will be wearing a marked harness or vest.

Support Persons

A support person can be a paid worker, volunteer, family member or friend and does not necessarily require any special training or certification to offer support. Support persons offer a wide range of assistance including interpretation, speaking on behalf of the customer, note taking, reading, guiding or directing the customer, transportation, personal care and communication.

Assistive Devices

Assistive devices enable our customer to do everyday tasks such as moving, communicating, reading or lifting by eliminating barriers. Here are few examples of devices that could be used: wheelchairs, walkers, listening devices, portable oxygen tanks, laptops with screen-reading software and communication programs, canes, hand held devices and hearing aids.

POLICY

CIHI is committed to excellence in providing products and services to all customers including people with disabilities in a way that respects the dignity and independence and that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to access and benefit from our products and services.

CIHI will carry out its functions and responsibilities by:

- Communicating with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability;
- Training employees on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities and the use of assistive devices;
- Welcoming service animals on the parts of our premises that are open to the public
- Welcoming support persons who accompany people with disabilities
- Providing customers notice of temporary disruption in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities.

Guidelines:

Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

Customers with a disability who are accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog must be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

Support Persons

Customers with a disability, who are accompanied by a support person, must allow both people to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

Notice of temporary disruptions

CIHI will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternate facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed on CIHI's website.

Training for staff, etc.

- CIHI will provide training to all employees. The training is mandatory and is included as part of the new employee orientation training program (on-boarding) for staff and students. The training includes:
 - Introduction of AODA and its purposes
 - How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
 - How to interact with disabled people who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
 - How to use equipment or devices available on CIHI's premises or otherwise provided by CIHI that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
 - What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing CIHI's goods or services.
- CIHI will also provide training to external consultants who work on site for duration of 3 months or more.
- HR will maintain a training record including the dates on which the training is provided and the names of the participants.

Feedback process for providers of goods or services

Comments on our services are welcome and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way CIHI provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by email, verbally. All feedback will be directed to the Director, Human Resources & Administration. Customers can expect to hear back within 5 business days.

Procurement

CIHI has a process in place for procuring or acquiring goods, service and/or facilities that comply with AODA and this policy.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act