



Accessibility Plan 2021 to 2023

Bluewater Health is committed to the continual improvement of access to hospital facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for: patients, family members, staff, health care practitioners, volunteers and members of the community with disabilities; the participation of persons with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans; and the provision of quality services to all patients, family members and members of the community with disabilities. An **action plan** is **prepared bi-annually**, to identify existing barriers for individuals with disabilities, and outline plans to remove these barriers.

2021-2023 Action Plan to Reduce Barriers to Access for Ontarians with Disabilities

- Introduction
- Summary of recent barrier removal initiatives
- Barriers identified and action plan
- AODA Integrated Standard compliance requirements
- Barrier identification methodologies
- Communication of the Annual Plan
- Appendix A: Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

Introduction

Bluewater Health has developed an Accessibility Advisory Committee to:

- Review recent measures taken to remove barriers
- Identify barriers, and measures taken to remove barriers in the bi-annual plan
- Develop the multi-year accessibility plan
- Publicize and communicate the plan
- Develop policies and procedures specific to the AODA Standards and implement actions to achieve regulatory compliance

Summary of recent barrier removal initiatives from 2018 - 2020

Examples of Barrier that Have Been Removed:

- Various signage and way finding on the first floor registration area was changed in response to feedback.
- Visual aids installed on clear glass doors to give visual cues to the presence of the glass
- A cross walk was created for patients at the current entrance being used for all patients and visitors to Bluewater Health at Russell St.
- An automatic door operator was installed at the interior doors for staff going to and from T Lot.
- Two Acute Care rooms in Petrolia have been renovated complete with patient lifts a fully accessible washroom and in room sink.
- Greeters at the main entrance provide personal support and assistance to persons with a disability. The volunteers are trained to use Staxi chairs and provide way finding instructions.

Building Improvements List

The Building Services Department maintains a list of accessibility items that have been identified for improvement.

Identified Barriers List

The Patient Experience Specialist maintains a list in the RL6 system of accessibility concerns submitted by the public.

These are public concerns or complaints that have been received and being addressed.

1. Occupational Health door difficult to enter in a wheelchair.
Recommend installing an automatic door opener.
2. A need for a larger curb cut out at the front entrance by the Russell Street door where patients are currently being dropped off to enter the building
3. One door at the auditorium is in need of a door operator

Barrier Identification Methodologies

<i>Methodology/Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
Accessibility Advisory Committee reviews requirements identified in the integrated standards	Members of the Committee meet to review complaints and concerns and to interpret requirements outlined in the integrated standards for the current and upcoming year.
Staff and Public Feedback	The public provides feedback via the BWH website accessibility feedback form and/or 'Contact Us' feedback form. Alternatively, customers can use our compliments and concerns process by telephoning, email or face to face meetings
Audits/surveys	The Accessibility Advisory Committee monitors progress with addressing deficiencies outlined in audits and surveys

Communication of the Annual Plan

a) Objective

Bluewater Health will continue to communicate the Hospital's support for the enactment of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and its efforts to identify and eliminate barriers for people with disabilities. Our plan for 2018 to 2020 will ensure compliance with AODA regulations and respond to issues or concerns that are identified for improvement.

b) Key Audiences

- Patients, visitors, staff, physicians, students and volunteers with and without disabilities
- Community partners
- Patient representatives

c) Strategies

- Enhance communications vehicles to make the accessibility plan publicly available and to highlight steps taken to reduce barriers
- Integrate sensitivity access issues into existing customer service initiatives
- Continue to educate managers, staff, physicians, students and volunteers about the accessibility plan, the Hospital's commitment to improving accessibility and expectations for all staff
- Develop corporate policies and procedures in conjunction with the AODA standards

d) Vehicles

1. Utilize existing communications vehicles to make accessibility plan widely available to the community:

- Profile accessibility enhancements in Bluewater Health staff and patient publications
- Utilize technology such as the BWH website, corporate intranet and e-learning as a means to access information and increase knowledge about regulations, policies, and procedures specific to accessibility for persons with disabilities

2. Educate managers, staff, physicians, volunteers and students:

- Appropriate materials to be included in staff/volunteer orientation
- Posting of accessibility plan, implementation plan, etc. on website and intranet.
- Add accessibility education to the essential training matrix of mandatory courses for staff

e) Evaluation

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee will analyze feedback comments and concerns from clients
- Periodically an accessibility survey will be conducted to reveal if ongoing barriers exist
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee will monitor the annual accessibility plan to determine if action items are followed through.

Projects Started or Completed in 2019

- The Bluewater Health web site has been brought up to compliance with AODA standards and continues to develop.
- Introduction of a new PEP to the committee who is visually impaired has brought some new perspective and input to the group.
- Discussions have opened up with Health Records, Communications and IT around methods of making patient information available to the visually impaired as there is not currently a format available for this.
- Development of a proper process for acquiring and providing sign language services is being developed in co-ordination with the Canadian Hearing Society.
- Signage requirements have been identified at CEEH around accessibility into the emergency department as there is not currently a wheelchair ramp into the front doors from the parking lot.
- A subcommittee was created to review the Bluewater Health eLearning material for AODA compliance and evaluate how often this should be distributed to staff and partners of Bluewater Health.
- An “Action Register” was created to better keep track of AODA projects and their progress along with the designated owner of the project.
- The Bi-Annual provincial Accessibility Compliance report has been filed.
- Curb cuts by staff entrance Russell

Projects Started or Completed in 2020

- Visual aids installed on clear glass doors to give visual cues to the presence of the glass
- A cross walk was created for patients at the current entrance being used for all patients and visitors to Bluewater Health at Russell St.
- An automatic door operator was installed at the interior doors for staff going to and from T Lot.
- Two Acute Care rooms in Petrolia have been renovated complete with patient lifts a fully accessible washroom and in room sink.
- Greeters at the main entrance provide personal support and assistance to persons with a disability. The volunteers are trained to use Staxi chairs and provide way finding instructions.
- Educational material for staff and volunteers was updated and is currently being assigned to all new hires