



DRAFT

Mission

We create exemplary healthcare experiences for patients and families every time

Vision

Exceptional Care – Exceptional People – Exceptional Relationships

Values

Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence (CARE)

Accessibility Plan

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 annually, as required under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The **purpose** of these plans is to identify existing barriers for individuals with disabilities, and outline plans to remove these barriers.

2009-2010 Action Plan to Reduce Barriers to Access for Ontarians with Disabilities

- **Introduction**
- **Summary of recent barrier removal initiatives**
- **Barrier identification methodologies**
- **Barriers identified and action plan for 2009/10**
- **Communication of the Annual Plan**
- **Appendix A: Membership and Terms of Reference**

Introduction

In September 2002, the Ministry of Citizenship of Ontario proclaimed additional sections of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act that required hospitals and other public sector organizations to prepare annual accessibility plans. These plans are to identify existing barriers for individuals with disabilities, and to identify plans to remove these barriers.

The focus of the act is on:

- Physical and architectural design of barriers within the premises
- Information or communication barriers
- Attitudinal barriers
- Technological barriers
- Policies and practices

In response to the Act, Bluewater Health has developed an Accessibility Working Group to:

- Review recent measures taken to remove barriers
- Identify barriers, and measures taken to remove barriers in the 2009/10 plan
- Develop the annual accessibility plan
- Develop a plan for publicizing and communicating the plan
- Develop policies and procedures specific to the AODA Standards and implement actions to achieve regulatory compliance

Summary of recent barrier removal initiatives

As the hospital prepared for the development of the new building at the Norman Site, many barriers were addressed, identified and completed. As we work through this process to the completion of our hospital in July 2010, Facilities Planning works closely with the construction personnel to ensure disability barriers, issues and concerns are covered. A staff member from Facilities Planning sits on the Accessibility Working Group.

Physical & Architectural Design:

- Audits were completed at all three hospital sites.
- New wheelchair system (STAXI) was introduced at the Sarnia sites.
- New wheelchair accessible ramp installed at the Dialysis Unit – Essex Bldg., including an overhead shelter at the entrance.
- New wheelchair accessible registration desk at the Lab – Mitton Site.
- Wheelchair ramp permits access to the Dufferin Street entrance at the CEEH Site
- A new wheelchair accessible washroom has been built in the CEEH Emergency Department and three patient rooms in Acute Care have been retrofitted for wheelchair access.
- The recently redesigned visitor parking lot at the CEEH site has adequate accessible parking spaces located adjacent to the public entrance.
- The CEEH site provides a supply of wheelchairs for public use at all public access locations.
- Removed stairs from the Russell Street entrance and developed a grade entrance.

Physical & Architectural Design – continued:

- Accessible parking spots are closest to main entrance.
- Wheelchair accessible level curb was installed along Russell Street.
- Temporary ramp way from visitor lot to Russell Street entrance (until new entrance is opened).
- Continuous unobstructed walkway around construction site. (all sidewalks at completion of construction will be 5 ft. wide).
- All public access doors are automatic.
- Investigation of the PACT Team off site office space for physical barriers.
- Family washrooms were put in place at the Sarnia sites. Baby changing stations were installed within these identified washrooms.

Information and Communication:

- Review of interior/exterior sign packages including brail, colour review on interior wayfinding.
- Volunteers provide way finding instructions to patients and visitors at all main entrances at the Sarnia Sites, Monday to Friday, 8-4 pm.
- Consultation with volunteers with visual disability.
- Discussion with other facilities; review of other municipal accessibility programs.
- The newly upgraded Bluewater Health website provides public access to information and the font can be increased for persons with a sight disability.
- During the construction phase of the new Norman Street Hospital the Maintenance Department and Facilities Planning Department provide ongoing communications to staff and the public about temporary service interruptions.
- An interpreters list provides the names of people to contact to assist with language barriers.
- A pamphlet has been created to provide education for staff and volunteers on the proper approach for communicating with people who have various types of disabilities.
- A recent article was published in our corporate newsletter to heighten staff awareness about plans in Ontario to address barriers for persons with disabilities through legislated standards and the work being done internally at BWH to ensure we are in compliance with the regulations.

Policies and Practices

- In 2009, the Emergency Planning Committee conducted a review of all the emergency codes. The review process included addressing implications for persons with disabilities, such as procedures for evacuating persons with disabilities.

Barrier identification methodologies

The Committee used the following barrier-identification methodologies:

<i>Methodology/Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
Review of government requirements/legislation	The Team reviewed all documents.
Review of accessibility tool kit	The AODA Accessibility Working Group is using the tool kit as a guide for achieving compliance with the AODA Customer Service Standard
Audits/surveys	Staff at CEEH provided feedback RE: barriers via a survey in November, 2009 An accessibility audit was performed at the CEEH site Nov. 5, 2009 and included two members of the community with disabilities.

Barriers identified and action plan for 2009/2010

Physical & Architectural Design:

- Underground parking with handicapped spots will be available for persons visiting Dialysis, Cancer Clinic and Ambulatory Care.
- A large revolving door for the main entrance.
- All outdoor gardens will be accessible to people in wheelchairs.
- One unisex wheelchair accessible bathroom will be on each floor of the building.

Information or Communication Barriers:

- Will develop annual accessibility plan 2009/2010.
- Will communicate Annual Accessibility Plan to the public.
- The interpreter's list will be reviewed and updated then posted on the new BWH intranet so it is readily accessible to staff and volunteers.
- The education pamphlet on proper approaches for communicating with people who have various types of disabilities will be reviewed and made available to staff and volunteers through the new BWH intranet.

Attitudinal Barriers:

- Will develop a training program and train staff and volunteers on the AODA Customer Service Standard and BWH policy/procedures, in Q1, 2010.

Technological Barriers:

- A business case has been written for the installation of TTY/TTD telephones in the new Norman Site facility

Policies and Practices:

- A Bluewater Health AODA Customer Service Policy will be created that includes a feedback process for client complaints, concerns, and improvement suggestions. In addition the policy includes a staff training plan for customer service, a method for communicating service disruptions, provisions for service animals and support persons, and provisions for certain assistive devices.
- Will develop documents that include information regarding service animals and support persons.
- A further review of selected corporate policies and procedures will be conducted in 2010, to identify if they impose any barriers.

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 2009/10 identifies goals, which can be used as a foundation to build upon in future annual accessibility plans.

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:

- Distribute information to appropriate areas in the Hospital and integrate content of the Action plan into existing patient communication
- Profile accessibility enhancements in Bluewater Health staff and patient publications
- Utilize technology such as the 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 AODA Accessibility Working Group will analyze feedback comments and concerns from clients
- A post construction accessibility audit of the new hospital will be performed and include persons from the community with disabilities.
- Periodically an accessibility survey will be conducted to reveal if ongoing barriers exist
- The AODA Accessibility Working Group will monitor the annual accessibility plan to determine if action items are followed through