



Providence  
Care

# Ontarians with Disabilities Act Annual Accessibility Plan

2009-2010

September 2009

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## Executive Summary

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) is designed to improve opportunities for people with disabilities living in Ontario. It provides for the involvement of people with disabilities in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to participation in community life. The Act requires that all public sector and broader public sector agencies and facilities develop an Annual Accessibility Plan. The Plan must address the removal and prevention of barriers in the organization's by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services, and it must be made available to the public.

In 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) received royal assent. The purpose of the AODA is to achieve accessibility for all Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structure and premises on or before January 1, 2025. It is anticipated that this Act will have a greater impact on accessibility in Ontario than the ODA, as it has much broader focus and impact. The AODA is based on the development and implementation of Accessibility Standards, and the first accessibility standard, the Customer Service Standard came into effect on January 1, 2008. Providence Care is required to be in compliance with this Standard and to initiate compliance reporting related to this Standard, January 1, 2010. Providence Care must also continue to meet its obligations under the ODA by developing and making public, an Annual Accessibility Report.

Other Accessibility Standards are continuing to be developed. Providence Care monitors the progress of these standards and provides feedback as necessary.

Providence Care has built a strong foundation for accessibility and this will allow the organization to successfully move forward with the ODA and the AODA Customer Service Standard, in addition to other Standards that apply to this organization, as they are developed. Accessibility is a core value of Providence Care and consistent with our Mission and Vision. As a core value, we are continually making changes and improvements to increase the accessibility of our environment and the services we provide. Providence Care has already initiated a number of activities that will support us as we move forward in complying with the Customer Service Standard. Over the coming year, Providence Care will carefully evaluate current activities that support the Customer Service Standard and identify additional opportunities for improvement.

Staff, volunteers, clients and families are committed to developing and maintaining a barrier free environment. Awareness of accessibility issues has increased at all levels of the organization and is expected to continue to increase as Providence Care meets its obligations to both the ODA and the AODA. Not only the clinical staff recognize the importance of accessibility; it has extended to support service areas such as maintenance and housekeeping.

Providence Care has a Corporate Accessibility Working Group whose mandate is to oversee and foster the development and updating of Providence Care's Annual Accessibility Plan. This group will also take on the responsibility of meeting the organization's obligations under the AODA.

This year's Annual Accessibility Plan describes those measures undertaken in the past year to remove barriers as well as activities identified for 2009-2010 to further address barriers to our programs and services.

Since completing the first Annual Accessibility Plan, staff of Providence Care have addressed numerous barriers across all three Providence Care sites. We have not been able to successfully remove all of these barriers, however they have now been flagged and we will continue to investigate opportunities for their removal. Hospital restructuring will present us with future opportunities for removal of a number of the identified architectural and physical barriers that cannot be resolved within our current buildings. All staff and the Providence Care Board of Directors remain committed to accessibility planning and the identification and removal of barriers.

## **Aim**

The aim of this Plan is to describe measures that Providence Care took during 2008-2009, and will take during 2009-2010 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to all Ontarians who use our facilities – as a place of work, of care, or other purposes.

## **Objectives**

This Plan describes the:

- i. Process by which Providence Care has identified, removed, and prevented barriers to people with disabilities.
- ii. Progress Providence Care has made in removing and preventing barriers to its facilities, policies, programs, practices and services that were identified in 2008-2009.
- iii. Measures that Providence Care will take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
- iv. Ways that Providence Care will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public.

## **Description of the Organization**

Guided by its Mission and Values, Providence Care is a leading provider of non-acute health care in Southeastern Ontario. Providence Care comprises three main sites: St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital (SMOL), Providence Manor (PM), and Mental Health Services (MHS), as well as 15 community locations, offering a wide range of services in Kingston and the surrounding area. A broad range of regional services and programs are offered to the community by over 1700 staff in a wide variety of services and professions.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Trusting in Providence and strengthened by the spirit and tradition of our Founders, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, we enhance the quality of life by meeting the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of each person.

We work with our partners to innovate and excel in education and research

We treat each person with respect, dignity and compassion.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Providence Care will lead the way in compassion and discovery.

### **The Accessibility Working Group**

In keeping with the corporate commitment to accessibility planning, a Corporate Accessibility Working Group was developed. The Corporate Accessibility Working Group has the support of, and a reporting relationship to Providence Care's Senior Management Committee. Members of the Corporate Working Group have been selected by Senior Managers for their expertise and knowledge in a broad number of areas, including barrier assessment (physical, architectural and attitudinal) and knowledge of policies and procedures and the budget process.

### **Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

Accessibility planning is part of Providence Care's commitment to meeting the needs of each person with respect, dignity and compassion. Providence Care has a history of identifying and addressing many barriers. Annual accessibility planning serves as a continuation of Providence Care's ongoing commitment to identify and reduce barriers. Accessibility has been adopted as a core planning assumption in

all care, administrative and capital planning and policy development activities. All new policies and procedures are edited with accessibility issues at the forefront and all existing policies and procedures have been or will be reconsidered in light of the issues.

The following definitions have been used for the purposes of Providence Care's accessibility planning. These definitions are drawn from the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

**Disabilities** include any physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement; conditions of mental impairment or developmental disability; learning disabilities or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language; mental disorder; injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under Workers Safety Insurance Board (WSIB).

**Barriers** include anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his/her disability such as physical barriers, information or communication barriers, attitudinal barriers, technological barriers, policies or practices.

### **Summary of Barrier Removal for Barriers Identified in 2008-2009**

In 2008-2009, Providence Care has focused barrier removal initiatives on the AODA Customer Service Standard.

A workplan, detailing gaps and opportunities for improvement in customer service was completed by December 2008. In addition, an accessibility policy has been developed and approved, an accessibility procedure is under development and the Compliments and Complaints policy and procedure has been updated to meet the requirement of the Customer Service Standard. The Customer Service Education Program is currently under development to be completed in the fall of 2009.

## **Methodologies for Identifying Barriers**

Barrier identification has focused primarily on issues related to the provision of accessible customer service. This information has been collected over a number of years through: Focus groups; Physical assessment checklist; Review of previously identified barriers; Assessment of barriers for people with visual impairments and hearing impairments; Staff suggestions; and, Feedback from patients, family and visitors.

## **Barriers to be Removed in 2009-2010**

In 2009 – 2010, Providence Care will focus barrier removal initiatives on activities that support compliance with the AODA Customer Service Standard and any other standards that may be enacted. Customer Service education will be initiated for all staff, volunteers and external contractors. The Transportation Standard, currently waiting for the approval of the Ontario Legislature, will be reviewed and a preliminary plan to achieve compliance with this Standard will be developed. The draft Accessible Built Environment Standard will be reviewed. Other activities will be added to the workplan based on the requirements of any new standards.

## **Review Process**

The Corporate Working Group met regularly from September to May to identify barriers and review progress towards barrier removal. The working group tracks the progress of barrier removal both formally – through written reports and meeting minutes – and informally.

## **Communication**

Providence Care will make the Annual Accessibility Plan available to internal and external audiences through newsletter articles, posting on the Providence Care web-site, and making it available in large print and audiotape upon request through the Communications Department.

# **APPENDIX I**

**Status of Barriers Identified  
in 2008-2009 at all sites**

**APPENDIX I - STATUS OF BARRIERS IDENTIFIED IN 2008/09 (ALL SITES)**

<b>PROVIDENCE CARE CORPORATE INITIATIVES PLAN</b>			
<b>Barriers/Objective Identified</b>	<b>Action/Quality Indicator</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Status</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify barriers to compliance with the AODA Customer Service Standard.</li> </ul> <p><i>Corporate Working Group will complete a detailed review of the Customer Service Standard and carefully evaluate current organizational initiatives and activities that support compliance with the Standard.</i></p>	<p>Develop a workplan including gaps and opportunities for improvement</p>	<p>Corporate Working Group time.</p>	<p>Workplan completed in December 2008.</p> <p><b>Completed.</b></p>

Providence Care  
 Ontarians With Disabilities Act  
**Status of Barriers Identified in the 2008-2009 Accessibility Plan**

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PROVIDENCE CARE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SITE PLAN			
Barriers/ <i>Objective</i> Identified	Action/Quality Indicator	Resources Required	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear process for clients/staff to identify barriers in workplace.</li> </ul> <p><i>Working Group to develop a process for clients/staff barrier free needs to be reviewed and resolved.</i></p>	<p>Develop CQI tool for staff/clients to identify barriers.</p> <p><i>Implement a process.</i></p>	Working Group Time.	<p>Draft process completed. To be implemented.</p> <p><b>In Progress.</b></p>