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Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy: Providing Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

1. Purpose

The policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities and assures that William Osler Health System (“Osler”) will provide services to the public in a manner that allows for equal access to all persons, including those with disabilities. In so doing, Osler will implement and practice this policy and related accessibility standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*.

2. Our Mission

Osler’s vision is: *To design health systems that serve the global community...driven by diversity.*

3. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission of “safe and compassionate care”, Osler strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We will also strive to provide people with disabilities, the same opportunity to access our goods and services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

4. Providing Goods and Service to People with Disabilities

Osler is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

• **Communication**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

We will train staff on how to access available options for alternative means of communication when required.

• **Telephone services**

We will provide accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by email, fax, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

- **Assistive Devices**

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff members are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

Customers may bring in their own assistive devices. Additionally, Osler will provide and have available various assistive devices as indicated below. Staff will be trained on how to access and use these devices

- Alertmaster Signaling System – available on each patient care unit
- Baby Monitor (used in conjunction with Alertmaster) – available on each patient care unit
- Pockettalker Pro – Available through Diversity Services, Speech Language Department and most inpatient units.
- Bariatric wheelchairs and stretchers

- **Sign Language Interpretation Services**

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who require the use of a sign language interpreter in order to access our services. We will always look for the most acceptable solution to communicating with people who speak in sign language but specifically, we will provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in the following circumstances:

- When necessary to properly communicate important healthcare discussions with a patient such as a discussion regarding options for treatment;
- When a person cannot communicate in any way other than sign language;
- Any other situation in which not providing an ASL interpreter would put the patient at a clear disadvantage in comparison to another patient in similar circumstances; and
- When a parent of a minor or a substitute decision maker would require ASL service if that person was him/herself a patient.

Any questions or concerns surrounding whether an ASL interpreter should be provided in a given instance should first be taken up with the Patient Care Manager and, if necessary, the Director of Diversity Services.

- **Billing**

We will provide accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy; large print; e-mail; and fax.

We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone, fax or email.

5. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

We will welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We will welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Osler's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

6. Notice of Temporary Disruption

Osler 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. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

7. Training for Staff

Osler will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

- Physicians
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contracted Service Providers
- Any other person whose duties require or might require interaction with the public

This training will be provided within six (6) months after above-mentioned persons commence their duties.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use and access the assistive devices and services that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Osler's goods and services
- Osler's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

8. Feedback process

Osler's ultimate goal is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Osler provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail, verbally, feedback forms or on the Osler website to the Patient Relations office. All feedback will be directed to the Chairperson of the Accessibility Committee.

Complaints will be addressed according to complaint categories already established in our company's complaint management procedures. Customers can expect to hear back an initial response from Patient Relations within seven (7) days.

A summary report of complaints will be generated monthly for review by the Chairperson of the Accessibility Committee and will be shared with the Committee on a quarterly basis.

9. Modifications to This or Other Policies

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of Osler that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

10. Notice of Availability of Accessibility Documents

We will ensure that proper notice is given to all persons who we provide our services to that this policy, our Annual Accessibility Improvement Plan and all related accessibility documents are available upon request and posted on our website.

11. Format of Documents

When we are required by regulation to provide documents relating to accessibility to any person with a disability, Osler will give the person the documents or the contents of the documents in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. In cases where this is unclear, Osler may decide mutually with the person on the best method for providing the documents in question.

12. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by the Patient Relations office in consultation with the Chairperson of the Accessibility Committee.

Latest Revision: November 30, 2010