



William Osler Health System

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2025-2030)



Message from the Chair of the William Osler Health System People-Centred Care Committee

William Osler Health System (Osler) is committed to delivering *world-class health care inspired by our people and communities*. Improving accessibility and inclusion by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for people living with visible and non-visible disabilities is one of the many important ways Osler works to achieve its Vision.

This plan reflects Osler's commitment to being people-centred and ensuring adherence to the requirements within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005). Actions taken will reflect Osler's dedication to fostering health justice, ensuring an accessible and inclusive environment for all.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Accessibility Sub-Committee (ASC) of the People-Centred Care Committee (PCCC).

Yasir Khalid, Director of People-Centred Care and Health Justice
Chair, People-Centred Care Committee

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Background

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), with the goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025. The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility for Ontario employers, related to ensuring that goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings are accessible and inclusive.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2025-2030), referred to as The Accessibility Plan (or The Plan), has been developed with the purpose of providing guidance in achieving a service and employment culture that is accessible and inclusive for all. The Plan was developed with information and priorities based on several resources, including the previous Osler Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2019- 2024), Osler-specific accessibility policies and feedback provided by members of the Osler Accessibility Sub-Committee (ASC), Patient Family Advisory Council and the Clinical Services Leadership Team. These forums include Osler health care administrators, clinicians, and patient and family partners who are members of the broader community served by Osler.

The Government of Ontario's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) outlines requirements and regulations pertaining to various 'Standards', including Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Design of Public Spaces, and Transportation. Osler will endeavour to meet as well as go beyond the AODA compliance requirements, specific to Osler's workforce and patient, family and community needs. In this Multi-Year Plan, Osler has documented both its accessibility achievements to date as well as current and future goals for improving accessibility to services, facilities, and employment opportunities.

Accessibility goals are included in the Plan because they are either mandatory AODA requirements or identified through Osler's interest-holders. Sources providing input include facility accessibility audits, occupational health and safety requirements, recruitment and retention best practices, review of accessibility policies and staff, physician, learner, volunteer and patient and visitor "lived experience".

A communication strategy is included, which shares Osler's accessibility goals and reinforces everyone's accountability to improve accessibility for all. The communication strategy addresses the priority of actively engaging with those most impacted as well as communicating details of the Plan to internal and external audiences. It is a priority to ensure that The Plan' is available and communicated in alternate formats, including digital, voice recognition, Braille, print media, various forms of presentations and word-of-mouth to convey relevant information and to increase awareness about accessibility at Osler.

Introduction

The AODA mandates that public sector organizations establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines the organization's strategy to identify, remove, and prevent barriers and meet its requirements under the AODA. Osler's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2025-2030), the Accessibility Plan or the Plan is approved and reviewed annually by members of the Osler Accessibility Sub-Committee (ASC), reporting to Osler's People Centred Care Committee (PCCC).

Osler recognizes that people living with a disability require a work and services organization to be compliant with AODA standards, in an effort to dismantle barriers and create mechanisms for all people to participate in an optimal quality of life, successful employment and an overall inclusive and welcoming environment.

As Osler endeavours to identify and remove barriers, it is important to build knowledge, confidence and commitment towards identifying the types of barriers and understanding their impact on people.

Types of Barriers:

Note: Definitions below have been taken directly from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) website to ensure accuracy and alignment with provincial standards. In Osler's context, a customer is inclusive of staff, physicians, volunteers, patients, and visitors.

Physical or architectural barriers

Physical or architectural barriers are features of buildings or spaces that limit people's access to services. For example, buildings without ramps, automatic doors, or accessible washrooms are physical or architectural barriers.

Technological barriers

Technological barriers happen when service providers use technology that is not accessible to customers with disabilities. An example of a technological barrier is a website where customers can only submit information by clicking a mouse. This kind of website creates a barrier for customers who use computers in different ways, such as with keyboard commands or head-pointing devices, instead of mice.

Information or communication barriers

Information or communication barriers exist when information is not provided in formats that all customers can access. An example of an information barrier is an audio announcement without a visual display of the same information. This situation creates a barrier for customers who can process information visually but not audibly.

Organizational barriers

Organizational barriers are policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities. An example of an organizational barrier is a strict no-refund policy in clothing stores. This policy discriminates against customers using mobility devices because they may be unable to use fitting rooms and try on clothing before purchasing.

Attitudinal barriers

Attitudinal barriers happen when service providers do not understand how certain disabilities affect customers' lives. For example, a service provider may feel uncomfortable serving someone with a speech impairment and assume that the customer cannot understand speech or hold a conversation. In reality, this customer will likely have a way of communicating easily, such as speaking slowly, writing, or using an alternative communication device that the customer can show the service provider how to operate it.

- *From a health care perspective:* Attitudinal Barriers are the negative treatment towards people living with a disability. Examples can be over-praising someone living with a disability, being able to complete everyday or menial tasks, discriminatory behaviour or negative stereotypes towards a group of people-labelling people with mental health issues. It may also be passing judgment and saying someone does not look like they have a disability.

Osler's Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

Osler is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive environment for all patients, families, staff, physicians, learners, volunteers and public visitors. Osler supports equal access and participation for people with disabilities and strives to meet their needs in a way that preserves dignity and independence.

This commitment extends to incorporating accessibility into policies, employment practices, procurement processes, communications, service delivery and facility design.

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers (2019-2024)

Osler has made significant progress in the last multi-year cycle, including:

Service Delivery

- Ensured alternate methods for patient relations feedback (email, phone, in-person), including a phone menu translated into Osler's top 5 languages.
- Provided accessibility devices in the provision of care related to mobility, sensory enhancement and safety.
- Assessed wheelchair and Staxi supplies and development of an inventory and retrieval process.
- Purchased bariatric waiting room chairs, stretchers and large bore Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine(s).
- Developed and implemented the 'Animals at Osler Policy'.

Education

- Provided mandatory AODA Customer Service and Requirements education for all newly hired staff and physicians, and annual mandatory Human Rights 101 education for all leaders through Osler’s Learning Management System.

Information and Communications

- Implemented touchscreen Integrated Bedside Terminals (IBTs) to enhance patient education.
- Ensured Osler’s external website is in compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards.

Employment & Retention

- Updated a comprehensive individual accommodation and return-to-work process.
- Ensured all job postings and recruitment processes incorporated accessibility considerations through engagement with the candidate to understand their needs.

Design of Public Spaces

- Integrated accessible design into renovations and new construction projects for people living with disabilities (Peel Memorial, Phase 2).
- Ensured continued compliance with local bylaws and best practices.
- Installed All Gender washroom signage in all current public universal washrooms and included as a requirement in new development projects (Peel Memorial, Phase 2).
- Reviewed and updated wheelchair accessible parking and washroom, and entrance buttons

Procurement

- Incorporated accessibility criteria into procurement documents and processes for goods, services, and facilities.
- Required vendors to demonstrate their commitment to accessibility as part of the Request for Proposal process.

In addition, Osler met all 2024 AODA standards as noted in the chart below.

5 AODA Standards	Compliance Schedule	Status
1) Information and Communication Standards	2024	Compliant
2) Employment Standards	2024	Compliant
3) Transportation Standards	2024	Compliant
4) Design of Public Spaces Standards	2024	Compliant
5) Customer Service Standards	2024	Compliant

Additionally, Osler has filed accessibility reports based on stated deadlines in the AODA legislation every second year since calendar year 2013.

Strategies and Actions (2025-2030)

Osler’s 2025-2030 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan builds on past achievements and incorporates evolving best practices, legislative updates, and feedback from patients, families, staff, physicians, learners and the community.

AODA Standard	Initiative	Accountability	AODA Barrier Addressed
1) Information and Communication Standards	Develop and publicize Osler’s contact information for anyone experiencing difficulties related to navigating Osler’s external website (HealthJustice@williamoslerhs.ca).	Strategic Communications, Health Justice	Information or Communication
	Ensure that the external website is compliant with WCAG 2.1 Level AA.	Strategic Communications, Health Justice	Information or Communication
	Ensure that electronic health records and the patient portal are compliant with WCAG 2.1 Level AA.	Health Justice, Project Unify	Information or Communication
	Implement and evaluate new 2025 Wayfinding Project	Planning & Development, Clinical Leadership, Health Justice	Physical or Architectural
	Continue to research technology enhancements to improve access to high quality and safe care for individuals with visual, motor, or cognitive disabilities.	Health Justice, Quality	Technological
	Ensure internal and external communications are available in accessible formats upon request.	Strategic Communications, Health Justice	Information or Communication
2) Employment Standards	Continue to provide accessible recruitment, onboarding, and career development processes	Talent Acquisition	Organizational
	Expand efforts to attract and retain employees living with disabilities.	Talent Acquisition	Organizational
	Incorporate disability inclusion and accommodation training for hiring managers.	Occupational Health & Safety	Attitudinal
	Periodically review and update accommodation policies based on staff feedback.	People & Culture	Organizational
3) Transportation Standards	Provide accessible mobility equipment and patient drop-off areas, and ensure patients have transport options.	Professional Practice, Compass, Transitional Care Program, Facilities	Organizational
4) Design of Public Spaces	Continue to ensure all self-service kiosks (e.g., parking pay stations, digital check-in systems) are accessible to all users	Registration, Volunteer Services, Parking, Information Services	Organizational

Standards	through availability at each entrance with clear and detailed instructions provided. Volunteers will continue to assist at the entrance to support patients in using the kiosks, wayfinding, and giving directions.		
	Ensure all new construction, renovations, and refurbishments comply with the Design of Public Spaces Standard.	Planning & Development	Physical or Architectural
	Ensure wheelchair accessible washrooms and doors are functioning, and any new requests are addressed.	Planning & Development	Physical or Architectural
	Maintain and monitor the visibility and upkeep of wheelchair parking spots.	Parking	Physical or Architectural
5) Customer Service Standards	Ensure Excellent Care For All Act (ECFAA) compliance regarding patient relations processes, including feedback through various formats i.e., external website, phone, e-mail, and in-person	Patient Experience and Health Justice	Organizational
	Involve patient and family partners (PFPs) with lived experience to achieve deliverables of “The Plan”.	Patient Experience and Health Justice	Organizational
	Continue to provide and monitor adherence with mandatory training to staff on accessibility requirements under AODA for all new staff hires.	People & Culture	Organizational
	Continue to provide and monitor adherence to mandatory training to all leaders on Ontario Human Rights obligations.	People & Culture	Attitudinal
	Continue to require vendors to demonstrate their compliance with AODA standards.	Mohawk Medbuy Corporation	Organizational
	Provide enhanced accessibility education through the Patient Experience Office iHuddle Curriculum.	Patient Experience & Health Justice	Attitudinal

Measures to Identify Barriers and Build Inclusive Spaces

Identifying Barriers

To assist with identifying accessibility barriers, Osler uses various methods to gather feedback from staff, patients, and the broader community.

Staff Feedback

- Assessment and feedback from staff and physicians regarding accessibility and accommodations requirements during the hiring, onboarding, and orientation processes.
- Joint Health Safety Committee (JHSC) inspection reports
- Employment Return to Work Meetings and Exit Interviews
- People-Centred Care Committee and other related hospital committee work
- Communication with the Director of People-Centred Care and Health Justice via HealthJustice@williamoslerhs.ca

Patient, Family and Community Feedback

- Patient Experience Feedback Forms via Osler's website
- Patient Experience Survey Results
- Patient Relations Feedback
- Clinical Service Managers and other supervisors
- Engagement with Patient Family Advisory Council

Monitoring Progress of the Plan

Osler's Accessibility Sub-Committee (ASC) will:

- Review progress biannually.
- Share status updates on OslerNet and the external website.
- Review current literature and research materials to advance knowledge of accessibility best practices.
- Incorporate feedback from patients, families, staff, physicians, learners and community partners into updates.

Communication Strategy

The Accessibility Plan will be made available to:

- OslerNet and Osler's website
- Integrated Bedside Terminals
- The Patient Family Advisory Council
- The Health Services Quality Committee, Board
- Various Osler committees as needed

Contact

Yasir Khalid

Director of People-Centred Care and Health Justice, Patient Experience Office

William Osler Health System

905-494-2120 ext. 56565

E-mail: HealthJustice@williamoslerhs.ca

Website: <https://www.williamoslerhs.ca/en/index.aspx>

Marcia Glasgow

Senior Lead and Strategic Advisor, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

William Osler Health System

Email: InclusionAndBelonging@williamoslerhs.ca

Phone: 416-270-2032

Resources

General

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Government of Ontario online laws.
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191>

Osler Accessibility Policies, Procedures, and Related Documents

- 1) Policy Name: Accessibility.
- 2) Policy Name: Animals at Osler.
- 3) Policy: Accessibility and Emergency Response Procedures.
- 4) Policy: Patient Experience - Feedback Management.
- 5) Accessibility Standards for Customer Service: A staff guide to excellence in serving people, including those with disabilities (Osler eLearning content).