

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Subject: Customer Service - AODA	Policy NO: 100-99
Department: Administration	Original Date: 2010-01-12
Approval: President & CEO (2026-10-07)	Reviewed: Quality & Risk Manager (2026-10-07)

PURPOSE

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) has, as its stated purpose to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises with the goal of achieving accessibility Ontarians with disabilities. West Nipissing General Hospital's purpose is to ensure compliance and ongoing development of an accessibility plan in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11).

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

West Nipissing General Hospital (WNGH) is committed to providing accessible care and service for its customers, patients, residents, and clients, while meeting the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11). Aligned with our purpose, core values and commitment, care and services are provided in the manner that respects the dignity and independence of all customers, which includes persons with disabilities. The provision of care and services to persons with disabilities is integrated whenever possible throughout the hospital.

Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the care and services provided on behalf of the organization.

POLICY STATEMENT

The West Nipissing General Hospital (WNGH) is committed to the provision of accessible, safe and quality health care for persons with disabilities.

This policy applies to all WNGH employees, physicians, volunteers, and students.

1. In keeping with the principles set out in the AODA, the WNGH is committed to providing respectful services that focus on the unique needs of each individual.
2. To achieve this, the WNGH shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to the public and other third parties adhere to the following guiding principles as set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11):
 - a) The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
 - b) The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
 - c) Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

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3. The WNGH supports an accessible Ontario where the independence and integration of those with disabilities is promoted. When communicating with a person with a disability, individuals working on behalf of the WNGH shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability and will make reasonable efforts to have the person with a disability understand both the content and intent of its communications.
4. The WNGH is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. The WNGH will ensure that staff are trained on or about the assistive devices that may be made available by the WNGH and realize that persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices to access the WNGH goods and services.
5. The WNGH is committed to welcoming people with disabilities and their service animals on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties and will permit the person to keep the service animal with them.
6. The WNGH will also ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies have been trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
7. If the service animal is excluded by law from the WNGH premises, the WNGH shall ensure that measures are available to permit persons with disabilities to access WNGH goods and services through other means.
8. The WNGH is committed to welcoming 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 WNGH premises with his or her support person. See policy #100.128.
9. 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 WNGH premises.
10. On occasion persons with disabilities require the assistance of a support person to protect their health and safety or the health and safety of others. If necessary, the WNGH may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on WNGH premises for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises.
11. In order to obtain, use or benefit from the WNGH's services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the WNGH. If there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the WNGH shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
12. The notice of the disruption will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available. Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the WNGH, by posting it on the WNGH's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.
13. The WNGH will ensure appropriate levels of training to all employees, volunteers, students, contract workers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the WNGH as well as those who deal with the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties.

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14. This training will be provided to all staff as soon as practicable and in keeping with the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11).
15. Records of training will be kept that include the dates on which training occurred and the number of persons trained.
16. Training will include the following topics:
 - i) The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
 - ii) The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
 - iii) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
 - iv) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
 - v) How to use the assistive devices available at the WNGH offices and otherwise made available by the WNGH for persons with disabilities
 - vi) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the WNGH's goods and services
 - vii) The WNGH's policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods and services to the public and other third parties.
 - viii) The requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities

Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to policies, practices and procedures dealing with the provision of goods and services to the public and other third parties.
17. The ultimate goal of the WNGH is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers, patients, residents, and clients with disabilities. Comments on the WNGH services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.
18. Feedback regarding the way the WNGH provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, by telephone, in writing or by delivering an electronic text by email, diskette or other reasonable methods. Complaints will be addressed according to complaints policies established by WNGH, ensuring it is will be accessible to persons with disabilities.
19. The WNGH shall prepare any additional documents describing its policies, practices and procedures as may be required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and, upon request, shall give a copy of such documents to any person. Further, the WNGH shall notify persons to whom it provides goods and services that the documents required under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) are available upon request.
20. WNGH shall provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports upon request, in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual, in consultation with the person making the request.

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21. WNGH will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which will be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years and posted.
22. WNGH is committed to fair and accessible employment practices in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

DEFINITIONS

The AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) contain and refer to various definitions that are relevant to this policy, some of which are set out below.

a) **Assistive device:**

any device that is designed, made or adapted to assist a person perform a particular task and may include, but is not limited to, wheelchairs, reading machines, recording machines, hearing devices and devices for grasping.

b) **Barrier:**

anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice ("obstacle").

c) **Disability:**

- i) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- ii) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- iii) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- iv) a mental disorder, or
- v) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997* ("handicap").

d) **Guide dog:**

a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations (Blind Persons' Rights Act 1990 s1 (1)).

e) **Service animal:**

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- i) an animal acting as a service animal for a person with a disability,
 - ii) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
 - iii) if the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- f) **Support person:**
 in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

REFERENCES

- Hospital Policy no.100-19 – Patient Relations
- Hospital Policy no. 100-126 - Notice of Temporary Disruption in Services and Facilities – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities.
- Hospital Policy no. 100-127 - Provision of Goods and Services Including the Use of Assistive Devices – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities.
- Hospital Policy no. 100-128 - Service Animals – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities.
- Hospital Policy no. 100-129 - Support Persons – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities.
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11)
- WNGH Accessibility Plan