

## CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Guelph CHC is committed to continually improving access to our building and community sites for our clients with disabilities. We will do this by:

- Establishing ABCs and practices that describe how we serve people with disabilities.
- Ensuring our ABCs are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration of services and equality of opportunity.
- Being open to the use of assistive devices for people with disabilities in our ABCs and in practice.
- Communicating with people with disabilities in ways that are respectful of their disabilities.
- Welcoming people accompanied by guide dogs, service animals or support people and providing information about access.
- Providing clear, complete, timely and prominent notice of temporary disruption to elevators or other service devices at any of our locations to help people with disabilities access our services.
- Providing timely and ongoing training to our staff, students and volunteers to ensure their understanding of and ability to follow the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and our Accessibility ABCs.
- Implementing and communicating our processes for receiving and responding to feedback and handling complaints about how we provide services to people with disabilities.

### DEFINITIONS

**Assistive Devices:** devices that people bring with them; such as walkers, magnifiers, or oxygen tanks, or devices that an organization might provide including; assistive software for people with visual, hearing or mobility impairments, wheelchairs or TTY (telephone teletype), real-time captioning.

**Disability:** as used in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is from the Human Rights Code and means:

- 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,

- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997
- The Guide: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 states that: "The definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities of which the effects may come and go."

**Service Animals:** animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities, such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. An animal is qualified to be a service animal if it is readily apparent the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or the person provides a letter from their health care provider confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person:** an individual hired or chosen to accompany a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to services. This may be a professional, relative, volunteer or friend.

## Notice of Disruption in Service Procedures

Guelph CHC ensures clients with disabilities who access our services and anyone with a disability who visits our sites be notified of all disruptions in Service Procedures as soon as reasonable possible.

### **Guelph CHC will:**

- Provide notice as far in advance as possible, through a variety of means, when there is a disruption in the usual facilities or attached services that Guelph CHC provides to people with disabilities that impacts access (e.g., accessible washrooms, ramps, parking spaces, automated doors, etc.).

### **Main Reception/Clinic Reception will:**

- Post all notices regarding service disruptions and include the following information;
  - o The reason for the disruption
  - o How long the service is expected to be disrupted
  - o Post in accessible places where people with disabilities can easily access the information: on the doors to the premises, on bulletin boards throughout the building and on the website.
- Post in advance when service disruptions are planned or anticipated (e.g., routine maintenance or upgrades).
- Post as soon as possible if the service disruptions are not anticipated (e.g., sudden malfunctions).
- Direct clients to alternative ways to access the service

### **Providers will:**

- Arrange to see clients in a more accessible location when there is an unplanned elevator malfunction that the client could not be notified of.

## COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This action describes the communication criteria that must be considered when communications are developed and distributed.

Guelph CHC is committed to effectively communicating with people with disabilities. When possible, Guelph CHC will offer alternative formats for communication in order to address the needs of people with disabilities (e.g., large print, Braille, etc.).

### **All Staff, Volunteers and Students will:**

- Give consideration to individual disabilities when communicating.
- Use appropriate language when referring to people with disabilities and taking action when unacceptable terms are used
- Communicate with clients over the telephone and in person in clear and plain language.

### **Guelph CHC will:**

- Educate staff, student and volunteers and others about providing effective ways of communicating with people with disabilities.
- Solicit feedback about our communications from clients, consumers, experts and others
- Keep current with communication technology and standards for people with disabilities.
- Develop and enforce communication criteria that provide a range of options to make all communication more accessible to people with disabilities by:
  - o Adopting current best practices whenever possible
  - o Ensuring there is a quality control process for communications
- When possible, provide aids that are used to help people with a disability communicate (e.g., text readers, amplifiers, screen magnifiers, and interpretation).
- When possible, offer alternative formats for communication in order to address the needs of people with disabilities (e.g., large print, Braille, etc.).

## Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Guelph CHC allows full access to our services and premises to people with disability and their service animals whenever possible.

### **Guelph CHC will:**

- Allow full access to our premises, unless that area of the organization is not open to the public or other third parties or animals are excluded by other laws such as public health.
- Educate staff, volunteers, students and others dealing with the public about the use of service animals.
- Provide training to staff, volunteers, students and others dealing with the public on how to interact appropriately with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- Assist people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal when they request help with their animal if it is safe and reasonable to do so.
- Ensure health regulations concerning service animals are posted in any area where food is prepared and served.
- Provide other measures to access our services for people with disabilities if their service animal is excluded by law from certain areas of our premises.

### **All Staff, Volunteers and Students will:**

- Will interact appropriately with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

## Support Persons

Guelph CHC allows full access to our services and premises to people with disability and their Support Persons.

### **Guelph CHC will:**

- Allow full access to our premises to people with disabilities and their support persons, unless that area of the organization is not open to the public or other third parties or it is unsafe to do so.
- Ensure a person with a disability and his/her support person are able to enter our premises together and that the person with a disability has access to his/her support person at all times while on Guelph CHC premises.
- Educate and training staff, volunteers, students and others who provide service to the public about the role of support persons for those with a disability and the accommodations for access the Agency.
- Include in our publications and website where appropriate that we welcome people who are accompanied by support persons.
- Give advance notice about the admission fee that will be charged for support persons who accompany people with disabilities to events or services sponsored by Guelph CHC. We will ensure that signage and template for events provide details about admission costs for support people are available and written in clear language.

### **Guelph CHC Clients will:**

- Provided implied consent to the presence of their support person and that the client's support person understands and commits to the confidentiality of the client's personal health information.
  - o It is also understood that if the support person has access to any confidential information related to other clients, they commit to keep it confidential. It will be the responsibility of the client's worker to explain this duty to the support person.

### **Support Worker will:**

- Maintain the confidentiality of the client's personal health information.

### **All Staff, Volunteers and Students will:**

- Communicate the Privacy and Confidentiality ABC to the Client and Support Worker

## Use of Assistive Devices

Guelph CHC ensures clients with disabilities who access our services and anyone with a disability who visits our sites will be able to use their assistive devices within the limits of any applicable privacy, health and safety laws or regulations.

### **Guelph CHC will:**

- Use reasonable efforts to ensure clients, consumers and visitors with disabilities and who use assistive devices are treated with dignity, independence, and equality of opportunity
- Educate staff about personal assistive devices
- Allow clients, consumers and people with disabilities who use our services or visit our site to use their personal assistive devices.
- Use alternative ways of helping clients, consumers or visitors with disabilities access our premises or services when they are unable to use their own assistive devices. Alternative ways must consider the principles defined in this policy. Examples of alternative ways are:
  - A staff person providing assistance when a personal assistive device cannot be used
  - writing information clearly and simply if electrical equipment causes static in a person's hearing aid
  - Asking how best to assist the person
  - Allowing the client, consumer or visitor to suggest alternate ways of being assisted and accepting suggestions within the agency's ability.

## CLIENT COMPLAINTS

With respect to complaints and allegations:

- The client has the right to complain about the care or lack of care experienced.
- The client has the right to complain or provide feedback about non-compliance with the Accessibilities for Ontarian Act, 2005.
- The accountability for resolving complaints or allegations rests with the Program Manager.
- Whenever possible, informal resolution of difficulties between staff and the complainant will be sought before the formal procedure is put into place.
- The resolution of the complaint will be timely so as not to delay appropriate action for the complainant or cause undue stress for the staff member.

Complimentary to the in-house complaint resolution process, there are Provincial Bodies that deal with Health Care Issues including:

1. **The Colleges** are guided by the Regulated Health Professions Act and include:
  - The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
  - The College of Nurses of Ontario
  - The College of Dietitians of Ontario
    - The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.
2. **The Health Professions Review and Appeal Board**, a government appointed body which has a review process available both to complainants and those health professionals governed by the Regulated Health Professions Act.
3. **The Civil Courts**, which respond to issues of negligence and malpractice when lawsuits are commenced.