

CATEGORY: System-Level Non-Clinical


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Page 1 of 3

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**PURPOSE**

To ensure that Health Sciences North (HSN) fulfills its commitment to providing equitable treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use of HSN services, programs, goods and facilities.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

HSN will establish policies, practices, procedures or other requirements for the identification and removal of barriers with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises or such other things as may be prescribed by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) 2005 and O. Reg. 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

**PROCEDURE****Method**Service Animals

1. Persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of HSN open to the public or third parties, unless such animal is excluded by another law. If excluded by law, other measures will be used to provide services to the person with a disability.
2. Service animals must be free of hookworms, fleas, diarrhea and skin lesions, vaccinated against rabies, clean, house trained, obedient and good tempered.
3. Service animals must wear special harnesses/leashes or be appropriately contained at all times while in the hospital setting.
4. Service animals must have proper identification (badge, letter, etc.). If the identity of the service animal is not "readily identifiable", the person can be asked to provide documentation (such as a letter, note or form) from a designated regulated health professional that states that they require the animal because of their disability.
5. The care and supervision of the service animal is the responsibility of the individual who uses the service animal. The individual must maintain control of the service animal at all times and is responsible for the cleanup of all animal waste. A family member, friend or volunteer may be necessary to assist with the service animal.
6. Service animals may be removed if they display any aggressive or disruptive behaviour.
  - A. If an employee feels threatened by the service animal's behaviour or the type of animal, the employee should contact their immediate supervisor or manager/director on-call for guidance and direction. Occupational Health & Safety Service will be notified of situations which affect the safety and well-being of hospital employees.
  - B. All patient complaints pertaining to a service animal will be forwarded to the manager and/or director as a first step to resolution. If resolution is not achieved at the unit/department level, the complaint will be forwarded to the patient representative for continued follow-up as per the *Complaint and*

*Compliment Management standard.*

### Support Persons

1. Persons with disabilities who use a support person are entitled to bring that person with them while accessing services at HSN. 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 HSN premises.
2. Persons with disabilities must consent to having the support person present during discussions involving their confidential health information or during tests and procedures.
3. The hospital will make every effort to ensure the support person is provided with comfortable seating should the hospital visit involve a prolonged period of time or an overnight stay.
4. The support person will be required to follow hospital policies and procedures, and will be provided with the appropriate protective attire where required.
5. The support person will be responsible for their own meal costs, or may opt to bring in food from home.
6. Parking fees will be in accordance with the current daily parking rates charged to all visitors and patients. If it is determined that a support person is required, the fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person must be waived.

### Personal Assistive Devices (PAD)

1. Persons with disabilities who use one or more PAD are entitled to access all public areas of the hospital permitted to others. In cases where the PAD presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or is not permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.
2. Patients who require PAD should be identified prior to or on admission.
3. PAD must be clearly identified as belonging to their owner.
4. Staff will keep the PAD accessible to the user whenever possible.
5. Care and maintenance of the PAD is the responsibility of the individual who uses the device(s). A family member, friend, or volunteer may be necessary to assist.
6. If a patient is required to be moved somewhere in the hospital where the use or presence of the PAD would be inappropriate or unwise, family will be asked to take the device home until such time as it may be used again.
7. It is the responsibility of the person using the PAD to ensure it is safe to use and that using it will not endanger others.
8. If a concern is raised regarding the unsafe use of the PAD it must be addressed immediately, either by the patient if they are capable of doing so or by others in removing or replacing the PAD.
9. Any adverse events resulting from the use or misuse of the PAD are to be reported on the Employee Incident Reporting System and/or the Online Incident Reporting System if an employee or patient/visitor is involved.
10. Any patient admitted to HSN who requires the use of a Power Mobility Device (PMD) with a battery charger, must follow several safety requirements as per the *Power Mobility Device* procedure.

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **Definitions**

1. Disability: Under Ontario Regulation 429/07 and the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*:
  - Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness (diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness/visual impediment, deafness/hearing impediment, muteness/speech impediment or physical reliance on a guide dog/other animal or on a wheelchair/other medical appliance/device);
  - A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
  - A learning disability, a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
  - A mental disorder;

- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, 1997*.
2. Personal Assistive Devices (PAD): Under Ontario Regulation 429/07 and the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, PAD include a broad range of products, including but not limited to: wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, portable communication boards and electronic communication devices.
  3. Regulated Health Professional: For the purposes of this policy, includes members of any of the following colleges:
    - College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
    - College of Chiropractors of Ontario
    - College of Nurses of Ontario
    - College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
    - College of Optometrists of Ontario
    - College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
    - College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
    - College of Psychologists of Ontario
    - College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario
  4. Service Animal: Any animal individually trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of normal daily living, to enhance quality of life and mitigate their disabilities. These animals provide persons living with disabilities a variety of services, including but not limited to: guiding individuals with impaired vision; alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds; providing companionship; pulling a wheelchair; alerting to seizures; opening/closing doors, or retrieving dropped items. Most service animals are dogs and can be of any breed or size. A service animal is afforded access to all places the public is invited when accompanying their human partner. A service animal is not considered a “pet” because it is specially trained to help a person overcome the limitations of their disability.
  5. Support Person: A family member, friend or someone employed to assist an individual with a disability.

### **Education/Training Related Information**

HSN will make all of its accessibility documentation available to the public and HSN community via its internet and intranet sites, and in an accessible version on request.

HSN will provide training on accessibility standards for persons with disabilities to all employees, volunteers and persons involved in developing the organization’s policies. HSN will ensure that training has been received by all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

Training will occur on an ongoing basis via new staff and volunteer orientation, and is available via the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) self-learning package. Training will also occur whenever changes are made to relevant policies, practices and procedures.

### **References and Related Documents**

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O 2005, c. 11*

*Blind Persons’ Rights Act*

Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19

Integrated Accessibility Standards, 2011 O.Reg.191/11

*Ontarians with Disabilities Act, September 2002*