

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Policy

Purpose

This policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other Acclaim Health policies, standards, procedures, by-laws and guidelines to comply with the Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards (Regulation) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 standards Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11. (the AODA), which were established to identify, remove and prevent barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas of customer service, information and communications and employment.

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 on or before January 1, 2025.

Definitions

All of the following definitions are set out in the AODA legislation or regulation unless otherwise noted.

“Assistive Device” means any tool, technology, or equipment that facilitates the performance of everyday tasks by a person with a disability. Examples of assistive devices include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids, oxygen tanks, and communication boards.

“Barrier” as defined in the AODA, anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. This includes physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Disability” as defined in AODA and the Human Rights Code, includes the following:

- a) 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,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
 - c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
 - d) A mental disorder, or
 - e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

“Guide Dog” is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person that also meets the conditions and qualifications prescribed by Guide Dogs, RRO 1990, Reg 58.

“Service Animal” is any animal accompanying a person with disability, so long as:

- a) It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

“Support Person” is a person who accompanies a person with disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

“Agent” is any person or organization that provides goods or services on behalf of Acclaim Health. This includes but may not be limited to sub-contract service providers.

“Third Party” is a generic legal term for any individual who does not have a direct connection or a legal transaction with Acclaim Health but who might be affected by it. For example, a participant in a meeting that is held at Acclaim Health, or a person who visits the Acclaim Health offices who is a representative of an Agent of Acclaim Health, but is not a direct employee of Acclaim Health or the Agent. It can also mean other customers, such as other businesses Acclaim Health provides services to.

Scope

This policy applies to Acclaim Health employees, volunteers and students who deal with clients or other third parties as well as persons involved in developing Acclaim Health policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, whether they do so as an employee, volunteer, agent or otherwise.



Policy

The Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS) Regulation was created to ensure everyone can participate in all aspects of public life. The Integrated Accessibility Standards addresses different aspects of public life including providing goods and services and employment and the workplace.

To achieve this mandate Acclaim Health will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of services to their clients and other third parties adhere to the following guiding principles as set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS): Ontario Regulation 191/11:

1. People with disabilities are treated as equally valued and respected as any other individuals.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities to benefit from the goods and services provided by Acclaim Health as other customers, taking into account the individual needs of a person with a disability even if doing so results in different treatment.
3. People with disabilities are free to choose the manner in which they are served.
4. People with disabilities have full access to the goods and services provided by Acclaim Health which includes the use of alternate measures in cases where full integration does not service the best needs of the person with a disability.

Consequences

A breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action and/or termination of the employee, volunteer or student involved.

Procedure

1.0 Communication

- 1.1 Acclaim Health supports an accessible Ontario where the independence and integration of those with disabilities is promoted.
- 1.2 When communicating with a person with a disability, individuals working on behalf of Acclaim Health 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 the communication.

2.0 Use of Assistive Devices

- 2.1 Acclaim Health is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services.



2.2 Acclaim Health will ensure that employees are trained on or about the assistive devices made available to the clients and realize that persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices to access Acclaim Health services.

3.0 Use of Service Animals and Guide Dogs

3.1 Acclaim Health is committed to welcoming people with disabilities and their service animals and guide dogs in areas that are open to the public and other third parties.

3.2 Anyone with a service animal or guide dog must keep the animal with them at all times unless it is unlawful to do so at which time the animal would be kept in a safe place for the short term duration. Acclaim Health will also ensure that all that are affected by this policy have been trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal or guide dog.

3.3 If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from Acclaim Health premises, Acclaim Health shall ensure that measures are available to permit persons with disabilities to access Acclaim Health services through other means.

4.0 Use of Support Persons

4.1 Acclaim Health is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

4.2 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Acclaim Health 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 Acclaim Health premises.

4.3 In the event that a fee is charged in relation to a support person's presence on Acclaim Health premises, advance notice of the fee will be provided. (Example: an admission fee to a special event was required).

4.4 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, Acclaim Health may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on Acclaim Health premises for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises.

5.0 Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

- 5.1 In order to obtain, use or benefit from Acclaim Health services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of Acclaim Health.
- 5.2 If there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, Acclaim Health shall give notice of the disruption to the public where possible.
- 5.3 The notice of disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.
- 5.4 Notice may be given by posting the information at a noticeable place on the premises owned or operated by Acclaim Health, by posting it on Acclaim Health web site, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

6.0 Training

- 6.1 Acclaim Health will ensure appropriate levels of training to all employees, volunteers, students, agents and others who deal with clients on their behalf as well as those who are involved in the development and approvals of policies, procedures and practices dealing with the provisions of services to clients or other third parties.
- 6.2 This training will be provided to all staff as soon as practicable in keeping with the requirements of the Regulation.
- 6.3 Records of training will be kept that include the dates on which training occurred and the number of persons trained.
- 6.4 Training will include the following topics:
 - 6.4.1 The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
 - 6.4.2 The requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards.
 - 6.4.3 How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
 - 6.4.4 How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
 - 6.4.5 How to use the assistive devices available at Acclaim Health offices and otherwise made available for persons with disabilities.
 - 6.4.6 What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Acclaim Health services.
 - 6.4.7 Acclaim Health policies, procedures and practices relating to the provision of services to clients and other third parties.
 - 6.4.8 Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to policies, procedures and practices dealing with the provisions of services to clients and third parties.



7.0 *Feedback Process*

- 7.1 The goal of Acclaim Health is to meet or surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on Acclaim Health services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.
- 7.2 Feedback regarding the way Acclaim Health provides 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.
- 7.3 Complaints will be addressed in accordance with Acclaim Health's complaint management procedures.

8.0 *Availability of Integrated Accessibility Standards Documents – Notice and Format*

- 8.1 Acclaim Health shall prepare one or more documents describing its policies, procedures and practices and, upon request, shall give a copy to any person. Further, Acclaim Health shall notify persons to whom it provides services that the documents required under the Regulation are available upon request.
- 8.2 Acclaim Health shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

9.0 *Modification of Policies*

- 9.1 Acclaim Health is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no change will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Furthermore, any policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

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