

Applies to: All employees, contract workers, consultants, volunteers and other third parties.

POLICY

Issued: 11/12/2009
Revised:
Edited:

POLICY STATEMENT

eHealth Ontario supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities as set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (also referred to as the accessible customer service regulation or the "customer service standard"), came into force on January 1, 2008. It is the first accessibility standard created under the authority of the AODA and is a significant step toward the overarching goal of a barrier-free Ontario. eHealth Ontario is required to be compliant with the regulation by January 1, 2010.

Accessibility standards will set requirements in a number of other key areas and will be reviewed at least every five years. New requirements may be added over time. Whenever new or revised standards are developed under the AODA, this policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure consistency. Updated information about the AODA and accessibility standards is available at: www.accesson.ca or by calling the AODA Contact Centre at 1-866-515-2025 (TTY 416-325-3408) or 1-800-268-7095 (toll-free).

This policy has been prepared to outline what eHealth Ontario must do to comply with the regulation and what our customers may expect from us. It is intended to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Whether a person's disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their need for accommodation respected whenever they interact with a government service.

This policy is available in alternate formats upon request.

POLICY GUIDELINES

Our mission

The mission of eHealth Ontario is to play the leading role in harnessing information technology and innovation to improve patient care, safety and access in support of the government's health strategy.

Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, eHealth Ontario strives at all times to provide goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. eHealth

Ontario is also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

Training for staff

eHealth Ontario will provide training on customer service to all staff, volunteers and other third parties who provide services, and who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. New staff and staff who commence new duties that involve interaction with the public or other third parties will undertake training as part of their orientation, if they haven't already done so.

eHealth Ontario will provide staff with training that includes:

- A review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use the equipment or devices available on the provider's premises, or otherwise, that may assist with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing eHealth Ontario goods and services; and
- eHealth Ontario policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Staff will be trained, as appropriate, on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Assistive devices

eHealth Ontario is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

We will ensure staff, volunteers and third parties understand what assistive devices are available within the organization and/or can be obtained through other organizations as well how to use those available assistive devices properly.

Use of service animals and support persons

Persons with disabilities may bring their service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public or other third parties. eHealth Ontario will ensure that all staff, volunteers and third parties dealing with the public are trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

On rare occasions, a manager may determine that a support person is required, or that a service animal cannot enter an area of the premises consistent with other laws. In these instances, managers will suggest appropriate alternatives and provide assistance.

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter eHealth Ontario premises open to the public or other third parties with his or her support person.

When support persons are required (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, attendants) for eHealth Ontario sponsored meetings, consultations or events, eHealth Ontario will arrange to pay support persons directly for their time and reasonable travel expenses upon request, in accordance with travel and hospitality guidelines.

Communication

eHealth Ontario will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This means staff will communicate in a means that enables persons with disabilities to communicate effectively for purposes of using, receiving and requesting eHealth Ontario goods, services and facilities.

eHealth Ontario will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

Telephone services

eHealth Ontario is committed to providing full accessible telephone services to our customers. We will train staff dealing with the public to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by other available means of communication that apply if telephone communication is not suitable to their communications needs or is not available.

Feedback process

The ultimate goal of this policy is to meet service delivery expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

eHealth Ontario will let customers know what methods are available for giving feedback. If a method is not suitable, customers may request another method. Privacy will be respected and all feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be taken to improve ministry services. Feedback received by eHealth Ontario will be redirected to a designated contact person.

Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints may require more effort to address, and must be reviewed for action, possibly at a higher level. Customers can expect acknowledgement of verbal/telephone feedback, or feedback left on a comment card, within two business days, and within fifteen business days of the receipt of a mailed/e-mailed complaint. The acknowledgement must indicate when the matter will be addressed and when the customer will be notified, and eHealth Ontario will follow up with any required action within the timeframe noted in the acknowledgement. Feedback/response will endeavour to be in a format that is accessible to the complainant.

Notice of temporary disruptions

eHealth Ontario will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by persons with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption is expected to last, and a description of any alternative facilities or services available (if any).

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises. Depending on the nature of the disruption, notice will also be provided on outgoing telephone messages and on the eHealth Ontario website.

This notice will be provided in accessible formats.

Modifications to this or other policies

eHealth Ontario is committed to ensuring that their customer service policies, practices and procedures respect and promote the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.

Any eHealth Ontario operational policy affecting customer service that does not respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of persons with disabilities will be modified or revoked.

Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, if the purpose of this policy is not understood, or to receive a copy of this policy, please contact:

Attention: Linda Rhijnsburger, Director HR Operations
eHealth Ontario
777 Bay St., Suite 701
Toronto, ON
M5G 2C8
ehealthontario-accessibility@ehealthontario.on.ca
Telephone (416) 946-4778

RESOURCES

For more information:

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/questions/aodo/act2005.htm>