

 Extraordinary Caring. Every Person. Every Time.		NAME: NH Accessibility	
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Purpose	1
2.0	Scope.....	1
3.0	Policy	1
4.0	Procedure – Interpretation Services	2
5.0	Procedure – Accessible Customer Service	3
6.0	Definitions	5
7.0	Education/Communications	5
8.0	Appendices	5
9.0	Related Documents.....	5
10.0	Related Forms.....	5
11.0	References	5
12.0	Supercedes.....	6

1.0 Purpose

Niagara Health (NH) recognizes the diverse needs of the community and is committed to continually improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in NH employment as well as services provided to our community. NH will meet and provide all appropriate Customer Service Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

2.0 Scope

Applies to all staff and physicians within Niagara Health.

3.0 Policy

3.1 NH is committed to providing a safe and therapeutic environment for all patients, staff and visitors. NH personnel shall follow this policy and the procedures outlined herein to ensure that patient, substitute decision maker and family rights are recognized and supported at all times. As required by the provisions of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the hospital will develop and communicate a multi-year accessibility plan that describes the measures taken in the past year and planned for in the upcoming year(s) to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities.

4.0 Procedure – Interpretation Services

Niagara Health recognizes that all patients have the right to exercise informed decision-making about their health care. This requires clinical staff to utilize Interpretation and Translation Services, when needed and at reasonable expense, to help deliver quality care, enhance patient-centered care, reduce risk and to help improve overall clinical outcomes. When a communication barrier is identified, staff and affiliates should make reasonable enquiries about the preferred language or method of communication needed to meet the patient's needs.

- 4.1 When the need for interpretation or an assistive device is identified, a professional interpretation service or appropriate assistive device should be used, whenever it is possible under the circumstances of the moment and at reasonable expense, to facilitate the communication process. Due to privacy concerns, consent from the patient/SDM is required for the involvement of an Interpreter service, with the exception of a medical emergency.
- 4.2 Consent should be documented on the health record by a member of the treatment team.
- 4.3 NH reserves the right (in collaboration with the patient/SDM/family) to select the most appropriate interpreter/translation service and if time, urgency or other circumstances require it, a family member or other support system may be engaged to help with translation.
- 4.4 Professional interpretation services or assistive devices are the most appropriate means of communication for critical moments in the provision of care, such as:
 - a) Informed consent for treatment / invasive procedures
 - b) Assessment and history taking
 - c) Diagnostic tests
 - d) Patient/SDM/family education
 - e) Discharge planning
 - f) Treatment sessions
 - g) Detailed technical explanations
 - h) Treatment options
 - i) Reporting of results
- 4.5 Consent from the patient/SDM is required for the involvement of an Interpreter service, with the exception of a medical emergency.
- 4.6 Access and Use of Interpreter Services
 - a) Consent must be obtained from the patient/SDM for use of an Interpreter Service:
 - i) The interpreter service obtains the consent.
 - ii) If consent is obtained, continue with the process.
 - iii) Consent is documented on the health record by a member of the treatment team.
 - iv) If consent is declined, the interpreter service is directed to inform the patient that treatment may be compromised, or it may not be possible to provide treatment resources, decide on the interpreter resource that best meets the need of the patient in that particular circumstance.
 - v) Staff must use the approved translator to translate all NH written materials to ensure quality standards.
 - b) When contacting the interpreter service be prepared to provide the following information:
 - i) Site
 - ii) Employee name
 - iii) Program
 - iv) Language required and dialect if applicable
 - c) InterpreTalk phone translation calls must be carried out as conference calls between the telephone interpreter, medical professional and patient unless the department has a dual handset telephone.
 - d) Additional information, cost and lead time is required for an in person or video conference translation (For in person or video conference please provide as much notice as possible)
 - i) Client name;

- ii) Location (department/unit) and phone extension;
- iii) Unit/department contact person;
- iv) Gender preference for interpreter, if appropriate;
- v) Type of situation (admission, test procedure information, etc.);
- vi) Date and time request needed, estimated amount of time needed.

To access 24 hours a day 7 days a week call: 1-855-659-3053 or 1-289-273-9680 (local)

Note: The applicable clinical program will be charged for utilizing these services.

- 4.7 Additional Available Interpretation Services (accessible via Switchboard)
 - a) Sign language interpretation for the Deaf - Canadian Hearing Society of Ontario Interpreter Services.
 - b) Deaf- Blind Interveners - Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- 4.8 LSA: Language Services Associates, our service provider for interpreter services also can provide:
 - a) The translation and/or interpretation of documents, manuals, notification inserts, websites, signage, multimedia, video, audio and narration;
 - b) Intercultural consulting, testing and training;
 - c) Face to face oral interpretation; conference interpreting;
 - d) Scheduled and unscheduled telephonic interpretation services for all language pairs involving English in any of the more than 200 languages offered by LSA, including American and British Language.

5.0 Procedure – Accessible Customer Service

- 5.1 All NH employees, volunteers, agents, and others who deal with the public or other third parties and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures must receive Accessibility Awareness Training.
- 5.2 Accessibility Awareness Training will include:
 - a) How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
 - b) How to interact and communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
 - c) The process for people to provide feedback on how we provide goods and services to people with disabilities and how we will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaint.
 - d) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an alternative device or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person to access services or goods.
 - e) Information on all NH policies and practices with regard to the AODA.
 - f) A review of the purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).
 - g) How to use equipment or devices on the NH premises that may help with the provision of goods or services and how to adapt existing service delivery methods to assist a person with a disability.
 - h) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing NH goods or services.
- 5.3 **Assistive Devices**
 All reasonable and necessary consideration should be given to persons requiring the use of assistive devices in order to ascertain what device is needed, how it is to be used properly, and how the patient will benefit from the provision and use of the device or associated services. The costs and availability, if any, of other measures which may be used as an alternative should also be considered.
 - a) **Bell Relay Service** - This service can also be used to enable telephone communication with hearing disabled persons. The person wishing to engage in conversation with the hearing disabled individual speaks to the operator, who will type the conversation and provide it to the hearing-disabled patient and/or transmit the message to the patient's Teletypewriter (TTY).

With the Voice Carry Over function enabled, the hearing-impaired person can read the message on the TTY and respond using their voice or through return type.

- b) **Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD/TTY)** - The Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) or Teletypewriter (TTY) transmits a visual signal over a standard telephone line. This technology is available for individuals with severe to profound hearing loss or poor speech recognition ability. As one person types their message, the signal is transmitted along the telephone line and is decoded at the other end by the TTY device. It is necessary for both parties to have a TDD or TTY system to communicate in this manner.

5.4 Interruption of Services

Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and in compliance with AODA standards the NH is responsible for taking certain actions if there is a temporary disruption in any NH facility or of services in whole or in part. The NH shall give notice of the disruption to the public as follows:

- a) Materials for print or on the web will be created using the following requirements:
 - i) the use of high-contrast colours for text and backgrounds
 - ii) the font size will be between 12 and 18 depending on the font family
 - iii) decorative fonts will be avoided
 - iv) a clean and simple design will be used to make the information easier to read
 - v) content will be written in plain language for all to understand
- b) Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.
- c) Notice will be given by posting the information at every public entrance on premises, by Security, Engineering or a designate under the direction of the Clinical Program Director or On-call Manager.
- d) The Clinical Program Director or On-call Manager will contact the Webmaster to post the service interruption on the NH public website.
- e) When required the NH will notify the media through Corporate Communications.
- f) Fan out lists may be distributed under the direction of the Vice-President, his or her Designate, or the most senior staff member by assigning staff.
- g) NH Corporate Communications may use social media to provide live-feed updates with regard to the service interruptions.

5.5 Feedback Process

The public can provide feedback on the accessibility aspect of the provision of goods and services by the NH through the Accessibility Advisory Committee by:

- a) E-mail at: patientrelations@niagarahealth.on.ca
- b) Mail addressed to: Patient Relations, St. Catharines Site, 1200 4th Avenue, St. Catharines, ON, L2S 0A9
- c) By phone: 905.378.4647 ext. 44423
- d) In person: Patient Relations, St Catharines Site, 1200 4th Avenue, St. Catharines, ON, L2S 0A9
- e) Feedback will be responded to within 3 business days following its receipt by the NH.

5.6 Notice of Availability of Documents

NH will notify its clients that the documents required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) are available upon request.

5.7 Format of Documents

Within reasonable expense, any document, or information contained in a document requested by a person with a disability will be provided, in advance or upon notification and request, in a format that takes into account that person's disability. The NH and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

6.0 Definitions

AAC = Accessibility Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is to identify issues and concerns regarding accessibility. From these concerns, the AAC can recommend ways for the hospital to make improvements, while making sure a course of action is in place for addressing those issues.

Affiliates – individuals who are not employed by the organization but perform specific tasks at or for the organization, including the following:

- a) Professional with hospital privileges – refers to those professionals formally affiliated with the hospital through the process of review of credentials and approval of privileges (e.g. physician)
- b) Students – individuals gaining practical/clinical experience in the hospital whether directly affiliated with the hospital or not.
- c) Volunteers – individuals who perform recognized functions with the hospital on a volunteer basis.

AODA = Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Interpretations – The process of rendering spoken language into another spoken language or the process of rendering spoken language into a visual language (e.g. American Sign Language (ASL) for the Deaf).

Interpreters – Any person who formally provides interpretations for the purposes of this policy must meet the standards for health care interpreting: maintain confidentiality, impartiality/objectivity, have respect for all individuals, be culturally sensitive, be accurate and proficient in using both languages and in medical terminology, maintain role boundaries, and use a standardized interpreting format.

InterpreTalk: Interpreting by Telephone service.

LEP = Limited English Proficiency

LSA = Language Services Associates, our service provider for interpreter services.

SDM = Substitute Decision Maker

TDD = Telephone Device for the Deaf

TTY = Teletypewriter

7.0 Education/Communications

N/A

8.0 Appendices

N/A

9.0 Related Documents

[Consent to Treatment -- Policy and Procedure](#)

10.0 Related Forms

N/A

11.0 References

11.1 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and associated Integrated Accessibility Standards and Regulations.

11.2 Blind Person's Rights Act and associated regulation R.R.O 1990, Reg. 58.

- 11.3 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom – Constitution Act, 1982.
- 11.4 Health Protection and Promotion Act 1990 and associated Ontario regulations.
- 11.5 Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990.
- 11.6 Ontario Regulations 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards.
- 11.7 Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 18.
- 11.8 Social Worker and Social Service Work Act, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 31.

12.0 Supercedes

Policy · NH Accessibility – 360-020-008

Policy · NH Accessibility – Customer Service – 360-020-009

Policy · NH Accessibility – Information and Communication – 360-020-012

Policy and Procedure · NH Accessibility – Interpretation Services – 360-020-010 and 360-020-010