

CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY FOR THE PROVISION OF GOODS AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY A-131

1. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the “Act”) and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (the “Customer Service Standard”) Barrie Community Health Centre (the “Company”) has developed policies, practices and procedures for the provision of services to people with disabilities (the “Policy”).

The Policy is guided by the fundamental principles underlying the Customer Service Standard. We are committed to ensuring that the requirements set out in the Act and the Customer Service Standard are rigorously observed.

We recognize the importance of services accessible to people with disabilities. We are committed to providing excellent customer service and a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment to all individuals who use our services.

2. DEFINITIONS

“We” and “Our” means the Company.

For the purpose of the Policy, all definitions in the Act and the Customer Service Standard will be deemed to be definitions under the Policy.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Company is committed to eliminating obstacles faced by Centre clients who have disabilities. We will make reasonable efforts to ensure that the Policy and related practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles as prescribed in the Customer Service Standard:

- (i) The Company will provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities;



- (ii) The Company will provide integrated services to people with disabilities wherever possible and we will provide alternative measures to provide services to people with disabilities where integration is not possible; and
- (iii) The Company will provide equal opportunity to people with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

4. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all employees of the Company and any third party that provides services on behalf of the Company and who may interact with the public or third parties.

5. PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

(a) Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, we will take into account the particular individual's needs and circumstances. Our staff who communicates with customers or third parties have been trained on how to interact with people with various types of disabilities in order to ensure we provide responsive and effective communication.

(b) Assistive devices and Accessible premise

The Company will permit the use of personal assistive devices by people with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

Our staff is trained on the use of various types of assistive devices by people with disabilities accessing our services, so as to better provide services to these individuals.

Printed Floor Plans

Printed copies of the floor plans are available through the building on the "In Case of Fire" signs.

Accessible Entrances

Accessibility buttons are at the main entrance and department entrance doors throughout the building.

Accessible Parking

Accessible parking is located near the main entrance.

Accessible Washrooms

Many washrooms are accessible and are marked as such.

Wheelchairs

A wheelchair is available at main reception, first floor.

American Sign Language (ALS) Interpreters

American Sign Language (ALS) Interpreters are not available at the BCHC. This service can be arranged by contacting Ontario Interpreting Services (OIS) at 705-737-3190 or TTY 705-737-4911 Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

(c) Telephone Services

In order to provide effective service to people with disabilities, our Staff are trained to speak to Centre clients slowly in clear and plain language over the telephone. If the disability provides a barrier to telephone communications, we will be available to communicate through email.

6. USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS

A person with a disability who uses the assistance of a service animal is permitted to access all areas of our premises open to the public or third parties with the service animal. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons related to his or her disability, we may ask the person to provide a letter from a physician or nurse that confirms that the animal is required for reasons related to disability.

Our staff has been trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

A person with a disability who requires the assistance of a support person will be allowed to enter all areas of our premises open to the public or third parties with the support person. The person with a disability will not be prevented from access to the support person at any time while on our premises.

7. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

If there is a temporary disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities we will provide Centre clients with notice as soon as possible. In the notice of disruption, we will include the following information: (1) the reason for the disruption, (2) the anticipated duration of the disruption, and (3) a description of any alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be posted on all public entrances to our premises.

8. TRAINING FOR STAFF

The Company will provide training to all of its employees, volunteers and other individuals who have contact with the public or third parties on our behalf, and all individuals who are involved in the development of our policies, practices and procedures. Training will be provided to each individual as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the duties which require the need for training.

Training will be received on an ongoing basis whenever we make changes to our policies, practices or procedures to ensure that the Policy is properly implemented and followed at all times.

Our training program consists of the following:

- (i) An overview of the purpose of the Act and the requirements under the Customer Service Standard;
- (ii) Training on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- (iii) Training on how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- (iv) Training on how to use equipment or devices available on the Company's premises or otherwise provided by the Company that may help with the provision of services to a person with a disability;
- (v) Training on what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Company's services; and
- (vi) Training on our current policies, practices and procedures relating to the Customer Service Standard.

The Company will keep records of the training provided, including the dates on which the training was received and the number of participants. For employee reference, "A Guide to Disability and Persons with Disabilities" is also posted on the Company's intranet.

9. FEEDBACK PROCESS

In order to properly assess the needs of people with disabilities, the Company has created a feedback process. We welcome comments from individuals on how effectively we are accommodating people with disabilities in the provision of our services.

(a) Receiving Feedback

Feedback may be provided in person, in writing, by email, on disk, or by another method.

(b) Responding to Complaints

The Company will address complaints that arise through the feedback process in a timely manner.

10. NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

The Policy and any corresponding practices and procedures will be made available to any person on request.

We post notice of the availability of these documents on all our premises to which the Policy applies and on our website.

11. FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS

Upon request we will provide a copy of the Policy in a format that takes into account the disability of the person submitting the request.

12. MODIFICATIONS TO THE POLICY AND RELATED POLICIES

Any modifications made to the Policy and any related policies will be for the purpose of improving our ability to provide services to people with disabilities. Any change made to the Policy or related policies will carefully take into account the impact on people with disabilities. Any provision of the Policy or related policies that does not enhance our ability to provide services to people with disabilities will be modified accordingly.

13. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POLICY

We welcome questions regarding our commitment to providing accessible goods and services to people with disabilities. If you have any questions regarding our policies please contact the Executive Director at (705) 734-9690, who will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Please see Policy A-107, “Use of Equipment” for e-mail protocol.

Attachment A – BCHC Accessibility Plan and Policies

Approval Date:	November 24, 2011
Approved By:	Executive Director
Reviewed by:	Management Team, All Staff, Board of Directors
Dates of Revision:	Sept. 2013, October 2013, Sept 2014
Reviewed by:	All Staff at September 13, 2016

Attachment A

BCHC Accessibility Plan and Policies

This 2014-21 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that BCHC will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Statement of Commitment

BCHC is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Accessible Emergency Information

BCHC is committed to providing the clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

Training

BCHC will provide training to employees and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees and volunteers.

BCHC will take the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessible laws by January 1, 2015:

1. Provide staff with accessibility awareness training, keep record of training dates and individuals that attended
2. Provide on-going training in respect to any changes
3. Provide educational or training resources in an accessible format upon request
4. Provide conversion-ready electronic format or training resources when available or arrange to find comparable

Procurement

When procuring goods, services or facilities, BCHC will incorporate accessibility criteria and features and if not possible, provide an explanation upon request. BCHC will take the following steps to update existing procurement policies to include:

1. Including accessibility language into procurement policies
2. Develop a strategy to communicate procurement policies and practices to employees

Kiosks

BCHC will take the following steps to ensure employees consider the needs of people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks by January 1, 2014:

1. Conduct a needs assessment inclusive of clients with disabilities prior to initiating procurement
2. Incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks

Information and communications

BCHC is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.

BCHC Web-site

BCHC will take the following steps to make the new website and content on the site conform with WCAG 2.0, Level A by January 1, 2014:

1. The BCHC Communications Team will ensure all new content posted on the web-site will adhere to the attached WCAG 2.0 Level A.

BCHC will take the following steps to make all websites and content conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA by January 1, 2021:

TBD

Accessible Feedback Processes

BCHC will take the following steps to make ensure existing feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities upon request by January 1, 2015:

1. Implement different methods for clients to provide input and feedback including in-person consultation, feedback forms including paper, web-based feedback forms that include consideration of both disability and literacy
2. Arrange for communication supports upon request
3. Notify BCHC clients about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports

BCHC will take the following steps to make sure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request by January 1, 2016:

1. Ensure all information is vetted via a range of staff including clinical and community providers to ensure content is reviewed and adapted to include consideration of various disabilities as well as literacy

Employment

BCHC is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. We will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, BCHC will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired:

1. Job postings/advertisements will be made available in different formats as requested.
2. Applicants will be notified about the availability of accommodation and that upon request, accommodations can be made in the material or process to be used
3. Prospective candidates can request an in-person opportunity to discuss the job requirements and qualifications.

BCHC will take the following steps to develop and put in place a process for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability

1. Inform employees of policies used to support employees with disabilities and policies providing for job accommodation
2. Develop a process to document individual accommodation plans

We will take the following steps to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities needs are taken into account if BCHC is using performance management, career development and redeployment processes:

1. Incorporate disability and accommodation plans during the performance review process

BCHC will take the following steps to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified:

Design of Public Spaces

BCHC will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- All areas of the BCHC
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

BCHC will put the following procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to its accessible parts of its public spaces.

- Temporarily re-designating other parking close to the main entrance as barrier free
- Place signage at the existing barrier free parking spaces

- Informing booked clients that require additional assistance to access the building and assisting these clients upon arrival

In the event of a service disruption, we will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available.

For more information

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact the Office Administrator at:

Phone: (705) 734-9690 ext. 247

Email: admin@bhc.ca

Accessible formats of this document are available free upon request from: admin@bhc.ca

Reference: Ministry of Community and Social Services (2014). Retrieved from:
http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/publications/accessON/policies_over50/appendix_a.aspx