

Minto-Mapleton

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**Family Health Team**

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Category: General Office Policies	
<b>1.0 Policy: Accessible Customer Service/Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities</b>	
Approved By: Executive Director	Approval Date: Nov 24, 2011
Applies to: Employees and Volunteers	Revision Date(s): Jun 16, 2025

## **A. BACKGROUND**

The Minto-Mapleton Family Health Team (MMFHT) is committed to providing client-centred service. The MMFHT wants to ensure that it complies with Provincial standards to provide accessible customer service to all our clients, including those with a disability.

### **Provincial Accessibility Standards**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario Legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province in five areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Transportation
- Employment
- Built Environment

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service took effect on Jan. 1, 2012. This Standard details specific requirements for service providers such as the MMFHT.

The following is a summary of the key requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures for providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
2. Communicate with a person with a disability in a way that takes their disability into account.
3. Set a policy to allow people to use their own personal assistive devices to access goods or services.
4. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of our premises that are open to the public, unless excluded by law.

5. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
6. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on the Customer Service Standards.
7. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how goods or services are provided to people with disabilities and how the MMFHT would respond to any feedback, including taking action on complaints.
8. Provide notice if facilities/services that people with disabilities rely on are unavailable.

## **B. PURPOSE**

This policy establishes that goods and services provided by the MMFHT shall be provided to persons with disabilities and all clients in accordance with the following key principles:

- **Dignity:** Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.
- **Independence:** Services for persons with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.
- **Equity/Equality of Outcome:** Service outcome is the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.
- **Integrated:** Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other clients.

In addition to the above key principles as provided for in the Customer Service Standard, the MMFHT will be:

- **Sensitive:** Service is provided in a manner that is respectful to an individual's needs.
- **Responsive:** Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required. For example, if needed, alternate formats will be provided by a specific deadline.

## **C. SCOPE**

The subject policy is delivered in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and is applicable to policies, procedures and processes of the MMFHT.

## **D. PROCEDURES**

### **1. Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use, or benefit from goods or services using their own assistive devices. In the event a person with a disability is hindered from accessing goods or services and after consulting with the person, the MMFHT will accommodate the person by using any other assistive measures available.

### **2. Service animals**

Service animals, such as but not limited to Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Seizure Response dogs, other certified service animals shall be permitted entry to all MMFHT facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. A service animal is defined as: "Any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability

and if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse or other government issued certification confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.”

Service animals are not permitted:

- Where food preparation is being undertaken; or
- as otherwise disallowed by law.

Where a Service Animal is to be denied access to a facility or meeting room, other accommodations may be afforded, such as:

- alternate meeting format, such as teleconference/videoconference;
- deliver the goods or service at an alternate time or location;
- any other assistive measures available to deliver a good or service to ensure equality of outcome.

Owners of Service Animals may receive information from staff as to the location of fresh water for the service animal and where service animals may be walked to relieve themselves.

### **3. Support Persons**

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to MMFHT facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. Where a Support Person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises, the person with a disability shall be accompanied by a Support Person when on the premises. The client shall determine whether a Support Person is necessary, however where an employee believes that a Support Person should be in attendance to protect the health and safety of the client or others, the following criteria shall be used in consulting with the client:

1. when there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or others (the mere possibility of risk is insufficient);
2. when the risk is greater than the risk associated with other clients;
3. when the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
4. when the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and
5. when the assessment of the risk is based on the individual’s actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance, or fears about a disability.

### **4. Notice of Service Disruptions**

In the event a temporary service disruption occurs that would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to MMFHT facilities, goods, or service, the MMFHT will post a notice or otherwise make the disruption known to clients in the following methods/places:

- Notice on entrance doors if safe for employee to do so
- Phone message

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other means possible to deliver the goods and service, such as:

- the goods and service delivery agent may provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability at an alternate place and time, as deemed appropriate.

All notices of disruption shall include:

- the name of the event/service;
- the normal service location being impacted;
- alternate service locations, if available;
- alternate service methods, if available;
- hours of service availability;
- contact information; and
- any other information deemed appropriate to deliver a good or service.

## **5. Access to Information**

The MMFHT is committed to meeting the information and communication needs of people with disabilities and will consult directly with a person with a disability to best determine their needs. When requested, the MMFHT will provide information and communication support in an accessible format, as required. Accessible Formats may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, and other formats usable by people with disabilities. Individualized Accommodation Plan will be implemented so that people with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to people without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the person's unique needs and set by the needs of the individual, to a reasonable amount, covered by MMFHT.

## **6. Training**

All employees of the MMFHT and Volunteers providing direct service to persons with a disability shall be trained in the various aspects of accessible client service delivery. All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the Accessibility Act and an awareness of the subject
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of Disabilities
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs
- Training on the Human Rights Code
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing services.

Regular training will be available to MMFHT staff on a regular basis at MMFHT staff meetings.

## **7. Feedback process**

Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic e-mail.

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or:

Executive Director, MMFHT

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Phone: 519-638-2110 Fax: 519-638-5096 Email: [sborges@mmfht.ca](mailto:sborges@mmfht.ca)

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve client service. In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in the format in which the feedback was received outlining actions deemed appropriate, if any.

#### **8. Notice of Availability of Documents**

This policy and any other document deemed to be key in the delivery of goods and services will be made available upon request in a format that considers the person's disability.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy will be made available on the MMFHT website.