



# Accessibility Plan Status Report

Effective: January 1, 2024

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### Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that would otherwise prevent their full participation in the life of the province.

To this end, the AODA requires each hospital to:

1. Prepare a multi-year accessibility plan;
2. Make the plan public;
3. Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every 5 years;
4. Consult with persons with disabilities in the preparation, review, and updating of this plan;
5. Prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the accessibility plan; and
6. Post the status report on the hospital’s website.

This is the first annual status report on the multi-year plan published on January 1, 2023 for the period January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2027, prepared by the AODA Committee of Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre (HDSHRC).

For the purposes of accessibility planning, HDSHRC uses the same definition of disability as the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. Disability is defined as:

1. 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,
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
4. a mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

A ‘barrier’ is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. An example of each of the different kinds of barriers is shown below:

Barrier Type	Example
Physical / Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter
Informational / Communicational	Print that is too small to be read by a person with low vision
Attitudinal	An assumption that a person who has a speech impairment can’t understand what is being said to them
Technological	A website that does not support screen-reading software
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly, or at all

## 1. Preventative and Emergency Maintenance

Maintenance is performed in order to help ensure that the Hospital remains accessible to staff and the public. Whenever possible the Hospital attempts to utilize a proactive approach through routine inspections, preventative maintenance and planning. However, at times unforeseen circumstances can occur and emergency maintenance is required. The Hospital implements a similar approach regardless of the cause of the maintenance (planned or emergency), this is because we put a plan in place when applicable, but in emergency we have the technology and infrastructure to quickly respond as well.

Should there be a disruption due to emergency maintenance or scheduled preventative maintenance the Hospital notifies staff and the public via signage, overhead announcements and where applicable through our social media platforms. The Hospital is fortunate to have several accessible parking lots, walkways, entrances, seating areas, service counters, communication aids, elevators, etc. Where there is a service disruption the Hospital has the ability to notify and re-route staff and the public to ensure accessibility is maintained.

For example: in the event that one of the hospital elevators is scheduled for maintenance requiring the elevator to be out of service for a duration, or the elevator required unplanned, emergency maintenance, an alternate plan will be developed and communicated via various communication methods such as posting signage, overhead announcements and department huddles.

## 2. Accessibility Accomplishments

In addition to addressing the items in our multi-year Accessibility Plan, HDSHRC achieved the following accomplishments with regard to improving accessibility within our facility:

Type of Barrier	Area/ Department	Description of Barriers	Strategy for Removal/Prevention	Year of Accomplishment
Physical/ Architectural	Inpatient building – nursing	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital purchased 2 Sara Steady sit-to-stand aids. Patients who are partially mobile can transfer from bed to wheelchair with cuing only. This provides greater independence to patients. Several have been purchased for patient use at home once discharged. This	2023

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			equipment allows the patient to have greater independence and access to mobility.	
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Inpatient Building - nursing</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital purchased 42 IsoTour gel mattresses. These mattresses prevent pressure injuries. This means patients won't lose treatment time due to a hospital acquired injury. The mattresses also allow staff to reposition patients mechanically (with the aid of a bed) which reduces staff injuries. Comfortable mattresses provide patients with dignity during their hospital stay.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Inpatient Building - nursing</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital purchased 42 Stryker S3 beds. These beds have the latest technology. There are side rails that are designed for ease of patient use, which will provide patients more independence. These beds also has a pressure alarm. This setting is meant for exit seeking patients and is meant to reduce falls. By keeping the patient healthy, they are able to access therapy, and obtain their treatment goal.	2023
<b>Policy/Practice</b>	<i>Outpatient Building – AAC Clinic</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	AAC Clinic implemented group therapy sessions that allows clinic patients and visitors hands on practice time with various communication devices before they need to use the device in the community. This has also shortened waiting times for appointments and allowed faster access to therapy supports.	2023
<b>Policy/Practice</b>	<i>Outpatient Building – AAC Clinic</i>	<p>Many AAC clients need to receive services in their home because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They may not be able to leave their home</li> <li>• They utilize equipment that cannot be brought into the clinic e.g. lift chair</li> </ul>	AAC Clinic increased the number of home visits, allowing greater access to assessments and therapy for clients that specifically need to be seen in their home environment.	2023

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The home environment needs to be assessed</li> </ul> Intervention requires training of staff that work in the home, e.g. PSW in a LTC home.		
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Outpatient Building – Audiology</i>	The Audiology Department created a rotation schedule, whereby each Audiologist works in the same sound booth for an entire week. As a result, the department realized that they were not able to optimize their schedule as the smaller sound booth was not suitable for all patients. This resulted in gaps in the schedule, and less access to appointments for patients.	Audiology department installed another large sound booth. This will allow all audiologists to schedule any type of patient during all times of the workday. This will optimize scheduling, and increase the community access to our services. Updated audiometer and middle ear testing equipment was purchased for use in this booth. The sound booth is also fully accessible allowing greater access to the service.	2023
<b>Policy/Practice</b>	<i>Outpatient Building</i>	Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the number of building access points was reduced. This often caused patients to have to walk further to get to their outpatient appointment.	All external doors in the outpatient building were opened again. This allows patients to access their service area easier rather than having to walk through the front door and then to the treatment area. Now they can park closer to their treatment area and enter through those doors.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Outpatient Building – Rehab</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	Pool has been prepared for reopening, allowing our patients access to another form of rehabilitative treatment and allow them to achieve their rehab goals.	2023

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Type of Barrier	Area/ Department	Description of Barriers	Strategy for Removal/Prevention	Year of Accomplishment
<b>Technological</b>	<i>Outpatient Building – SLP and Audiology</i>	Process for booking appointments could be challenging for hearing impaired individuals.	The Speech Language Pathology Outpatient and Audiology sections of the HDS external website was reorganized to allow for a more user friendly experience and access to information. Audiology patients are able to request an appointment through the website instead of calling the department, which is sometimes difficult for hearing impaired individuals.	2023
<b>Informational / Communicational</b>	<i>Outpatient Building - SLP</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	SLP staff attended Supported Communication for Adults with Aphasia training Part 1. This will allow improved communication and treatment between therapists, family members and aphasia patient.	2023
<b>Technological</b>	<i>Entire Facility</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital purchased a new Health Information System (HIS). The process to build the system will take multiple years, and will commence in 2023. The HIS is more patient and staff friendly, and will improve patient safety. As part of the building process, the hospital will obtain input from community partners, patient advisors and staff.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Entire Facility – Nursing &amp; Rehab</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The Hospital purchased two bariatric offset handle canes. These canes will be loaned to patients to use while in our facility. These canes provide patients with mobility and independence.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Inpatient Building – nursing</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital renovated approximately 30 washrooms on the nursing floors and replaced the old flooring with anti-slip mould and mildew resistant flooring.	2023

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<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Outpatient Building</i>	It was identified that flushing the toilet in several washrooms presented a challenge for those in wheelchair as they had to lean over the toilet to reach the flusher.	The hospital replaced toilets in several washrooms with automatic flushing toilets in the outpatient building to allow ease of flushing and improve dignity for those utilizing the washroom facilities.	2023
<b>Policy/Practice</b>	<i>Outpatient Building</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	Installation of new digital controls for heating and air conditioning in the rehab building to allow for better individualized comfort of staff and patients.	2023
<b>Policy/Practice</b>	<i>Entire facility</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	New hire orientation agenda and schedule was updated – AODA presentation time changed from the end of the day to the beginning in order to ensure that staff were alert and improve engagement with this presentation to ensure greater comprehension and retention of information within the presentation.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Inpatient Building – sidewalk near front parking lot</i>	Grass and dirt next to sidewalk had eroded over time causing risk to those with mobility devices to become stuck if wheel veered off the sidewalk.	Added sod and built up the ground next to the sidewalks near the inpatient front and side doors in order to reduce the chances of a wheel on a mobility aid getting stuck if the aid goes off the sidewalk. Improves patient safety and access to outside spaces.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Entire facility - exterior</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	Two tractors and a salter were purchased to utilize with groundwork, snow removal and ice build up prevention in parking lots. This improves both patient and staff safety.	2023
<b>Technological</b>	<i>Entire facility</i>	Due to renovations, locations called by fire panel in the event of a code red were no longer up-to-date. This caused confusion for staff and patients.	New fire alarm panel was installed. This process also includes updating of oral announcement of fire locations to align with hard copy maps as locations and names have changed over the years due to renovations.	2023



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<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Inpatient Building – 1<sup>st</sup> floor</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	Hospital purchased and installed in the dining room a new wheelchair accessible ice machine for use by staff and patients.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Entire facility</i>	Current inpatient building was built in 1930's. Only 11 of our 134 beds are in private rooms. If a patient with an infection or communicable disease is admitted into a four-bed ward, three beds were blocked from the system, delaying access to care and therapy.	HDS has been approved for a \$2.5-million grant to move to the next stage of developing a 16,000-square-metre inpatient building for Niagara residents. The current building will be demolished and replaced by a new facility with 196 beds — 62 more than it has now and more private rooms. The new facility, more beds and more private rooms will allow more access to rehabilitation treatments.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Inpatient Building – front washrooms near lobby</i>	Hooks on back of door very high, inaccessible by those in a wheelchair.	Hooks on the back to the door lowered to allow access by all.	2023
<b>Technological</b>	<i>Inpatient Building – entire facility</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital purchased an Activac wound management system which allows patients to continue to receive therapy while still receiving wound therapy that might have previously left them bed or wheelchair bound.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Inpatient Building – nursing</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital purchased several transfer boards which allows patients the opportunity to get out of bed without assistance which improves independence and allows for greater mobility.	2023
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	<i>Entire facility</i>	Some hand sanitizer stations were higher, making it more challenging for those in a wheelchair to access.	The hospital lowered the identified hand sanitizing dispensers so they can be more easily accessed.	2023

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Technological	<i>Inpatient Building – palliative</i>	No barrier – proactive change.	The hospital purchased Bluetooth speakers which improves the ability for palliative patients to speak and converse better. This also allows families the opportunity to play music and relay family messages to the patient at end of life.	2023

### 3. Future Opportunities

The AODA Committee continues to meet to review feedback received through our numerous barrier identification methodologies, including employee and patient accessibility surveys, and to thereby identify future opportunities for improvement.

Starting in 2016, HDSHRC was also able to engage directly with former patients, our Patient Advisors, to better understand their perspectives and priorities with regards to accessibility.

In addition to any new initiatives identified in 2024, HDSHRC will explore:

- Upon any major renovation, the location of fire activation pull stations will be reviewed to determine if any need to be lowered to allow better access for those utilizing wheelchairs.
- SLP will attend Supported Communication for Adults with Aphasia training Part 2 – Train the Trainer. This will assist the SLP with providing of training to family members on communication with patients with aphasia.
- AAC Clinic to purchase an iPhone 14 to allow their patients to communicate (more) independently.
- The Hospital Information System currently being built will be implemented.
- Nursing plans to purchase new bedside tables to replace the old ones that are becoming difficult for patients to move and utilize.

### For More Information

***For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:***

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***Our accessibility plan is publicly posted at:***

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Website: <https://www.hoteldieushaver.org/site/accessibility>