

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (AODA)

Intent

This accessibility plan outlines the strategy of Lake of the Woods District Hospital to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities and comply with the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Statement of Commitment

Lake of the Woods District Hospital is committed to providing an accessible environment for all clients, patients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, volunteers, students, professional staff, and visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. As an organization, we respect and comply with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and its associated regulations. We strive to provide an accessible and welcoming environment for everyone by identifying and removing barriers in our workplace and ensuring that new barriers are not created. The LWDH ensures that persons with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities. We are committed to meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and integrative manner that respects their dignity and independence.

Summary of the Objectives

The following is a summary of the objectives endorsed by the Lake of the Woods District Hospital.

The areas of focus are as follows:

1. **Employment** includes notifying applicants about the availability of workplace accommodations by implementing a three (3) stage process of recruitment, selection and notice to successful applicants.
2. **Information and Communication** are applied by providing accessible formats and communication support upon request, to people with disabilities. Ensuring that the Lake of the Woods District Hospital website and web content is accessible. Focusing on clear signage throughout the hospital and accessible emergency procedures, plans or public safety information.
3. **Customer Service Training** is provided through online modules and videos focusing on the AODA standards, professional development, and quarterly Accessibility Committee meetings.
4. **Design of Public Spaces** is considered through the needs of individuals with disabilities in terms of being able to access our amenities on a 24/7 basis. This includes accessible washrooms, parking, ramps, sidewalks, and wayfinding.
5. **Transportation** is primarily liaised out of our Mental Health and Addictions department. Employees who are responsible for transporting clients must be trained to use accessible equipment and features safely and ensure passenger safety during emergencies.

Barrier Recognition Procedure

When planning for renovations or any changes to areas within the departments, a critical lens on accessibility requirements is also used to identify any modifications for barrier elimination.

Lake of the Woods District Hospital has found that one of the most effective ways to become aware of barriers is through the eyes of patients, volunteers, and staff members. The LWDH Accessibility Committee meets quarterly with regular tours of the hospital to discern any new barriers or to observe how previous barriers have been regulated.

Another way that we can identify barriers is through our Quality and Risk department. Patients and staff members can submit feedback for review and the Quality and Risk staff will share this information with the Accessibility Committee.

Lake of the Woods District Hospital is also in the process of building a new structure for the All-Nations Hospital. This planning process has included community members from the LWDH AAC to ensure that the new hospital is built completely barrier free. It is estimated that the new hospital will be completed within the next seven (7) years.

Monitoring of the Plan

To ensure the Lake of the Woods District Hospital's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is properly maintained, a quarterly and annual report will be provided at the Accessibility Committee's regular meetings. This will allow committee members to request additional information if needed and provide comments and suggestions.

Completed Initiatives

Lake of the Woods District Hospital has completed the following initiatives to prevent and remove barriers and comply with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*:

General

- During the hiring process at Lake of the Woods District Hospital, every incumbent is asked prior to starting their interview if they need any accommodations due to a disability;
- The hospital hired Porters/Attendants to assist with patient transfers, patient appointments, and general needs of patients as of September 2023, and;
- The hospital has partnered with agencies to provide client navigators to eliminate language barriers for patients and their support persons/caregivers during their healthcare journey.

Information and Communication Standards

- Laptops have been provided to staff who are unable to attend work in person so that they can work remotely; this was completed in 2020; and
- Clear Communications Guidelines in terms of advertising and branding have been implemented since 2019.

Employment Standards

- The Occupational Health and Safety Department has hired both a staff-centered Physiotherapist and a Social Worker on site at Lake of the Woods District Hospital. Staff can access services from these individuals upon request Monday-Friday during regular working hours. This initiative was completed in September 2023; and

- Occupational Health and Safety have also created an entire program for individuals with allergies. This includes a safety plan, policy and procedures, completed in 2023.

Transportation Standards

The Mental Health and Addictions program at Lake of the Woods District Hospital connects with First Nations transportation services for accessible transportation. These services usually have residents who need to attend the hospital on a regular basis. Note: These services are simply in partnership with LWDH and not directly affiliated.

Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment)

- A new accessible washroom complete with an accessible shower was added to the Emergency Department in September 2023; and
- Lake of the Woods District Hospital collaborated with a professional to create legible and consistent wayfinding signage throughout the hospital in 2019.

Customer Service Standard

- At the main entrance of the Lake of the Woods district Hospital, a new accessible service desk has been installed with a lower counter on the side for easier access in August 2023; and
- Accessible seating with bariatric chairs in the registration office and the main waiting Area, completed in 2020.

New and Ongoing Initiatives

Lake of the Woods District Hospital plans to take or is in the process of completing the following initiatives to prevent and remove barriers and comply with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*:

General

- Lake of the Woods District Hospital is currently awaiting approval to begin construction of the new All Nations Hospital. The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be strategically included in the design and development of the new Hospital; and
- LWDH recently updated the Accessibility (AODA) training modules, adding IASR videos, and revised re-training requirements.

Information and Communication Standards

- Incorporating Accessibility language for meeting invites, events, or promotions into the Lake of the Woods District Hospital's Branding Guidelines. Proactively preparing for an individual that requires accommodation; and
- The LWDH Accessibility Committee is working to recruit a Braille consultant to further options of communication and wayfinding for individuals with little to no visibility. Estimated completion date of January 2024.

Employment Standards

- Occupational Health and Safety is adding an Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Plan to the modified work process; and
- The requirement to review Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Plan is being appended to the existing Emergency Response Policy.

Transportation Standards

In terms of accessible transportation, the Lake of the Woods District Hospital does not directly provide services. However, due to the lack of accessible transportation currently available in the district, the Lake of the Woods district Hospital plans to bring the fact that this is a necessity for individuals living with disabilities to stakeholders for further action and assistance.

Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment)

- The Lake of the Woods District Hospital is currently constructing a new service area in the Emergency Department, estimated date of completion is June 30th, 2024; and
- Morning Star Centre, for individuals struggling with addiction, is also under construction to create a more accessible facility.

Customer Service Standards

- Revised, enhanced Customer Service training and annual retraining, to be implemented for all staff by October 2023; and
- Implementing hearing assistive devices at service counters to ease communication with patients from behind glass or if an individual has a hearing disability by December 2023.

Conclusion

The Lake of the Woods District Hospital's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) continues to identify any barriers that may impede the public's access to its services. The AAC will endeavor to remove or prevent all identified barriers in an effective manner. Quarterly meetings with the committee members will resume to regularly monitor, respond to, and ensure compliance with all AODA initiatives and IASR requirements.

This plan is in effect from January 2023 to December 31, 2027.

If you have any questions or concerns about this plan or its initiatives, or if you want to receive a copy of the plan in a different accessible format, please contact our Administration Department by emailing admin@lwdh.on.ca or calling 807-468-9861.