

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Revised December 2021
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Policy

CommuniCare Therapy is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. This is accomplished by ensuring that people with disabilities are treated equally and with respect.

This policy has been established pursuant to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and applies to all CommuniCare staff and independent contractors who deal with patients and the public in the delivery of rehabilitation services, including in patients' homes.

It is CommuniCare policy to always ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ont. Reg. 429/07) in achieving accessibility for all patients of CommuniCare Therapy.

CommuniCare Therapy shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that its organizational policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to the public and other third parties adhere to the following guiding principles as set out in Ontario Regulation 429/07:

- Services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from CommuniCare's services.
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from CommuniCare's services.

It is CommuniCare Therapy policy to provide AODA education and training to all staff and independent practitioners.

It is CommuniCare Therapy policy to post and make public the organization's AODA policy.

It is CommuniCare Therapy policy to adhere to mandatory AODA compliance reporting requirements as established by the Government of Ontario.

Procedure

In keeping with the principles set out in the AODA legislation, CommuniCare Therapy is committed to providing respectful services that focus on the unique needs of each individual.

Every CommuniCare patient is given the same opportunity to access our services; this includes people who require service animals, the use of a wheelchair, accessible buildings (i.e., elevator, accessible washroom), communication or assistive devices or other supports.

All staff and clinicians are sensitive to attitudinal and communication barriers that may exist and may negatively impact communication with patients. Each staff member and clinicians must complete Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) training when joining CommuniCare.

Communications

When communicating with a person with a disability CommuniCare staff shall do so in a manner that considers the person's disability and accommodates the person's communication needs and preferences. CommuniCare will make reasonable efforts to have the person with a disability understand both the content and intent of its communications.

Use of Assistive Devices

CommuniCare is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. CommuniCare will ensure that staff is trained on or about the assistive devices made available by CommuniCare and realize that persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices to access CommuniCare goods and services.

Use of Service Animals

CommuniCare is committed to welcoming people with disabilities and their service animals to our office and will permit the person to keep the service animal with them for the duration of their work shift or office visit. A Service Animal, as defined by the AODA, includes guide dogs and any other animal that may be required by a person with any disability as defined by this policy.

If the service animal is excluded by law from CommuniCare premises CommuniCare shall ensure that measures are available to permit persons with disabilities to access CommuniCare goods and services through other means.

Use of Support Persons

CommuniCare is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter CommuniCare's premises with their support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on CommuniCare premises or receiving CommuniCare services.

On occasion persons with disabilities require the assistance of a support person to protect their health and safety or the health and safety of others. If necessary, CommuniCare may require a person with a disability who may pose a risk to the health and safety of themselves or others to be accompanied by a support person while on CommuniCare premises or receiving CommuniCare services. This requirement would be for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

In order to obtain, use or benefit from CommuniCare's services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of CommuniCare. If there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, CommuniCare shall give notice of the disruption to the public.

The notice of the disruption will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available. Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by CommuniCare, by posting it on CommuniCare's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Training

CommuniCare ensures appropriate levels of AODA training to all employees, volunteers, students, and independent contractors in accordance with our organizational policy and requirements of the applicable legislation. Education and training provided includes a review of **current** AODA legislation, service requirements and related organizational policies. Training and education are integrated into the organization's onboarding processes and Joint Health & Safety Annual Work Plans. AODA Education and training is tracked and documented in the organization's human resource records.

Compliance with AODA education and training requirements is recorded and reported as per CommuniCare's mandatory reporting schedule with the Government of Ontario.

Availability of the Accessible Customer Service Documents

CommuniCare shall prepare any additional documents describing its policies, practices and procedures as may be required by Ontario Regulation 429/07 and, upon request, shall give a copy of such documents to any person. Further, CommuniCare shall notify persons to whom it provides goods and services that the documents required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 are available upon request.

CommuniCare shall give the person the documents, or the information contained in the documents described above, in a format that takes into account the person's disability and facilitates that person's understanding and receipt of information.

Compliance

It is acknowledged that any small business with at least 20 employees in Ontario has additional obligations under the AODA in that it must:

- Self-evaluate and certify their compliance with the applicable standards for accessible customer service, accessible employment practices and accessible information by completing and filing an accessibility report with the Government of Ontario as per the designated reporting schedule.
Note: Accessibility Standards for self-serve kiosks and public space do not apply for the organization and will not be evaluated or reported upon to the Province.
- Prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures, including those relating to service animals, temporary service disruptions, training and other issues, and upon request provide a copy of such documentation to any person.
- Prepare a document describing its training policy, a summary of the contents of the training, details of when the training is to be provided, the dates actually provided, and the number of

individuals to whom it was provided.

CommuniCare is in full compliance with this requirement.

CommuniCare's AODA Certification number is SCR346511.

DEFINITIONS

The AODA and Ontario Regulation 429/07 contain and refer to various definitions that are relevant to this policy, some of which are set out on the following page.

Dignity: Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and receive respect from other people.

Independence: When a person with a disability is allowed to do things on his or her own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration: Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar ways as others, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity: Service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods or services equal to those given to others.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice ("obstacle").

Disability:

- (a) 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,
- (b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) A mental disorder, or
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997* ("handicap").

Guide Dog: A dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations (*Blind Persons' Rights Act 1990 s1 (1)*).

Service Animal: An animal acting as a service animal for a person with a disability,

- (a) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (b) If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person: In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Related Documents

CommuniCare Mission, Vision & Values Statement
Harassment and Discrimination P&P
Equal Opportunity P&P
Recruitment P&P
Selection and Hiring Process P&P
Orientation P&P
Orientation Checklist
Accommodation of Employee Accessibility Needs P&P
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
O. Reg. 191/11: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS