

Sleep Management Group

Accessibility in Ontario

SMG



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Accessibility in Ontario

The [*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*](#) (AODA) is intended to reduce and remove barriers for people with disabilities so that Ontario can become more accessible and inclusive for everyone. Collaboration among businesses, organizations, communities and all levels of government is key to reaching this goal.

Sleep Management Group (“SMG”) is committed to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers that impede the ability of people with disabilities to access care and services. This includes patients, families, staff, and volunteers.

In June, 2005, the Ontario government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). The purpose of this enhanced Act is to develop, implement and enforce standards of accessibility for all Ontarians. Sleep Management Group’s Accessibility Policy is consistent with the Act.

The purpose of this policy is to outline practices and procedures in place at SMG to help identify and remove barriers that impede a person's ability to access care and services.

Responsibility

Employees, volunteers, contractors and all others who have a working relationship with SMG, will interact with people with disabilities in a manner that provides equitable care and that respects dignity and independence to achieve patient and family centered care.

Definitions

Assistive Devices: are supports made available by providers to improve access to care for patients with disabilities. For example, wheelchairs.

Disability: According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, a "Disability" is defined as:

- 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,
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,



- A mental disorder, or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Personal Assistive Devices: For the purpose of this policy, Personal Assistive Devices are personal supports used by persons with disabilities that enable them to carry out the activities of daily living and allow access to SMG' facilities. Patient-owned equipment such as power-mobility devices (power wheelchairs or scooters) are regarded as Personal Assistive Devices

Service Animals: Service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities. Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

Support Person: A "Support Person" accompanies a person with a disability, in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure. A Support Person may be a paid professional, a volunteer, family member or friend of the person with a disability (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

Guiding Principles: SMG will ensure that we are identifying and removing barriers to access for people with disabilities by:

- Encouraging people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to improve access to SMG' facilities.
- Communicating with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
- Allowing people with disabilities to bring their guide dog or service animal with them to areas of the premises that are open to the public.
- Permitting people with disabilities who use a support person to accompany them and ensuring that a person with a disability has access to his or her support person while on our premises.
- Providing notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on are temporarily disrupted.
- Establishing a process for people to provide feedback and explaining how SMG will respond to any feedback and what action will be taken.



- It is the responsibility of every staff member to be attentive to the concerns of patients, their families and visitors and to resolve concerns related to accessibility.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will provide training to staff, volunteers and contractors who communicate with patients on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

- People with disabilities
 - If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level
 - Do not touch items or equipment, such as canes or wheelchairs, without permission
 - If you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, do not leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors
- People with vision loss
 - When you know someone has vision loss, do not assume the individual cannot see you. Many people who have low vision still have some sight.
 - Identify yourself when you approach and speak directly to the patient
 - Ask if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them
 - When providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive
 - Offer your elbow to guide them if needed
- People who have hearing loss
 - Once a patient has identified themselves as having hearing loss, make sure you are in a well-lit area where they can see your face and read your lips
 - As needed, attract the patient's attention before speaking. Try a gentle touch on the shoulder or a wave of your hand
 - If your patient uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter place
 - If necessary, ask if another method communicating would be easier
- People who are deaf blind

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- A patient who is deafblind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or a note
- Speak directly to your patient, not to the intervener
- People with speech or language impairment
 - Do not assume that a person with a speech impairment also has another disability
 - Whenever possible, ask question that can be answered with “yes” or “no”
 - Be patient. Do not interrupt or finish your patient’s sentences
- People who have learning disabilities
 - Be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond
 - Try to provide information in a way that takes into account the customer’s disability
- People who have intellectual / developmental disabilities
 - Do not make assumptions about what a person can do
 - Use plain language
- Provide one piece of information at a time
- People who have mental health disabilities
 - If you sense or know that a patient has a mental health disability, be sure to treat them with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else
 - Be confident, calm, and reassuring
 - If a patient appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help

Telephone Service

- We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our patients.
- We will provide training to staff, volunteers, and contractors to communicate with customers over the telephone:
 - Speak in clear and plain language and speak clearly and slowly
 - We will offer to communicate with patients by email if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available



Assistive devices

- We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services

Use of animal service

- We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties
- We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers, contractors and others dealing with the public have received training in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal
 - Remember that a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal. Avoid touching or addressing them
 - If you are not sure if the animal is a pet or service animal, ask your patient.

Support Person

- We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person
- Any person with disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to SMG's premises with his or her support person.
 - If you are not sure which person is the patient, take your lead from the person using or requesting your goods or services, or simply ask
 - Speak directly to your patient, not to their support person

Notice of disruption

- SMG will provide patients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities
- This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or service, if available

Feedback process

- The ultimate goal of SMG is to meet and surpass expectations including when serving patients with disabilities
- Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated



- Feedback regarding the way SMG provides health care services to people with disabilities can be made by:
 - Using patient feedback form
 - Via email
 - Via telephone
 - By any other appropriate method

Training for Staff

- SMG will provide training to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and all others who deal with the public
- Mandatory training will be provided to all current staff, volunteer, contractors and to new staff during their respective orientation to SMG. Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices, and procedures
- Records of all training, including content and participants will be maintained by SMG.

Scope of Training

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standards
- How to identify, interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- SMG policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standards
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services