

ETOBICOKE MEDICAL CENTRE *Family Health Team*

400 -85 THE EAST MALL TORONTO, ONTARIO M8Z 5W4 TELEPHONE
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Etobicoke Medical Centre Family Health Team (EMC-FHT)

EMC FHT ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (AODA)

1. Policy Objectives

The goal of this policy is to ensure that the Etobicoke Medical Centre Family Health Team (EMC-FHT) meets the standards set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA") and its regulations.

2. Policy Statement

The Etobicoke Medical Centre Family Health Team welcomes and encourages people with disabilities to use its services. Etobicoke Medical Centre Family Health Team will provide access to Program services for people with disabilities in a way that respects their rights to dignity, independence, and integration.

This commitment is consistent with EMC-FHT's mission to deliver services in a welcoming and supportive environment and consistent with EMC-FHT's core values of equity, accessibility, diversity, and fairness in the treatment of all individuals. EMC-FHT will establish policies, practices and procedures which support the accessibility standards established under the AODA for customer service, information and communication, employment, and the building environment.

EMC-FHT will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

EMC-FHT defines reasonable efforts as providing the best possible service within the context of available resources by balancing the needs of people with disabilities with the needs of others who may encounter barriers to access and within the community at large.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the delivery of services and programs provided by the EMC-FHT and that the EMC-FHT welcomes and encourages people living with disabilities to use its services.

EMC-FHT will provide, where possible, access to its services for people with disabilities in a way that respects their right to dignity, independence, and integration. EMC-FHT uses the definition of disability in the AODA. A disability can include a) physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement, b) mental impairment/disorder or developmental disability, c) learning disability, and d) an injury or disability for which government benefits are received.

The EMC-FHT strives to provide service to everyone in a welcoming and supportive environment. EMC-FHT will consider the individual needs of people with disabilities in delivering service by:

- Considering individual and special needs when applying EMC-FHT policies and procedures
- Communicating with people in a way that meets their needs
- Welcoming feedback and suggestions about services in a variety of formats
- Welcoming accompanying support persons
- Offering assistive devices such as a limited number of wheelchairs
- Welcoming service animals
- Letting people know, if possible, if services will not be available; for example, if a program is going to be closed
- Ensuring that emergency responses address accessibility
- Training staff and volunteers to provide the best possible service

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- Providing a forum for addressing concerns about or challenges associated with accessing our services including phone number and key contact information
- Providing opportunities for continuous improvement and regular review of accessibility policies and procedures

4. Principles

Dignity – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people. People with disabilities are not treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality, or convenience.

Independence – allowing a person with a disability to do things on their 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 way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable the person to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity – people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that given to others to access our goods or services, wherever possible.

5. Accountability

The EMC-FHT is accountable to employees, clients, the community it serves and to the government of Ontario for meeting the standards set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”) and its regulations.

6. Communication

Program staff and volunteers will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes their needs into consideration. Where an employee with a disability requests accessible formats/communication supports, that the employee will be consulted to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support in respect to: (a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee’s job; (b) information that is generally available to employees in workplace (s. 26(1-2)).

7. Training for staff and volunteers

EMC-FHT will continue to train: (a) all employees, and volunteers; (b) all persons who participate in developing the organization’s policies; and (c) all other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the organization (s.7(1)) to meet the needs of people with disabilities. This training will be mandatory and include:

- Training on Human Rights Code and other accessibility standards (s.7(1-4)).
- Training as appropriate to work duties and responsibilities of the employees, volunteers, and other persons and as soon as practicable (s. 7(2-3)); and
- Training on an ongoing basis in respect of any changes to the policies and the accessibility laws and human rights code.

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8. Feedback process

EMC-FHT welcomes patient feedback and makes information available to all patients on how to provide feedback. Feedback is accepted by EMC-FHT in a variety of formats. Staff assistance is available to support all residents, including people with disabilities, in providing feedback.

9. Requests for Accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code

EMC-FHT will continue to meet the standards set by the Ontario Human Rights Code. Where a request for accommodation is made, EMC-FHT will strive, where possible, to provide accommodation in a way that most respects the dignity of the person. EMC-FHT recognizes that people with disabilities may require individualized accommodation and that each person's needs are unique. Accommodation will be provided unless EMC-FHT experiences "undue hardship" as defined in the Code.

10. Workplace Emergency Response Information

- (a) Information will be provided to employees with disabilities, as soon as practicable, once the employer is aware of the need for accommodation (s. 27(1 & 3).
- (b) Information will be provided to designates assigned to assist the employees with disabilities, upon the employee's consent and that the individualized workplace emergency response information is reviewed:
 - a. when the employee moves to a different location in organization.
 - b. when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
 - c. when the employer reviews its emergency response policies (s. 7(2 & 4).

11. Specific Directives - Customer Service Standard

The following directives address the requirements established by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 ("Customer Service Standard").

a. Provision of Services

In keeping with EMC-FHT values of providing free and equitable access in a welcoming and supportive environment, EMC-FHT will:

- Provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and provides them with an equal opportunity to learn about, use or benefit from EMC-FHT's services.
- Integrate services for people with disabilities. EMC-FHT understands that equitable access sometimes requires different treatment including separate or specialized services. However, such services will be offered in a way that respects the dignity and full participation of people with disabilities.

b. Service Animals

EMC-FHT continues to welcome service animals (i.e., seeing eye dogs) that are needed to assist people with disabilities. If a service animal is excluded by law or health and safety reasons, other measures will be available in consultation with the person with a disability, to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods, services, or facilities. (80.47(3))."

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c. Support people

EMC-FHT welcomes people with disabilities and accompanying support people who attend to help them with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or to access goods or services. In most cases, EMC-FHT does not charge for services that it offers. However, when fees are charged for programs or services, these fees may be waived for support persons or advance notice will be given of any fees that a support person must pay. If a support person is required to accompany the persons with disabilities for health and safety reasons, it will be determined after consulting with the persons with a disability (80.47(5)).

d. Assistive Devices

EMC-FHT offers assistive devices to meet the needs of people with disabilities and will make reasonable efforts to permit the use of assistive devices that enable people with disabilities to use EMC-FHT's services. EMC-FHT defines an assistive device as a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating, or lifting (examples include, walkers, magnifiers for reading, etc.). EMC-FHT also recognizes that accessibility can be achieved and provided in different ways.

e. Employee Training

Under the AODA legislation, EMC-FHT is required to provide staff with accessibility standard training, and will do so as follows:

i) Current Employees

Current EMC-FHT employees will take part in a training program meeting with their respective supervisor's assistance using the *Staff Training Guide* provided by the Ontario Medical Association, entitled, *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

ii) New Employees

New employees will receive the same training as above on an individual basis as part of the EMC-FHT's orientation process. This training will be coordinated by the respective department supervisor who has been provided with the resources necessary to deliver the training.

iii) Content of Employee Training

- _ Introduction to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability legislation
- _ Goal and mandate of the AODA
- _ Overview of AODA Standards and related legislative requirements
- _ Definition of disability and types of disabilities
- _ Barriers to accessibility
- _ Principles of effective client services
- _ Proper etiquette for interacting with people with disabilities
- _ How to recognize and respond appropriately to people using personal supports, service animals and assistive technology

f. Notice of temporary service disruption

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EMC-FHT will attempt to notify patients with disabilities, by telephone where/when possible, should any disruptions in service occur, which may include the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption will last and a description of available alternatives, if any. In the event of an unplanned disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible.

g. Information and Documentation on Accessible Customer Service

EMC-FHT will document its policies, practices and procedures as required by the Customer Service Standard; this documentation will be posted in all public areas.

This Policy was updated by the EMC FHT Executive Director & Secretary-Treasurer on September 14/2023.