

Subject: Accessible Patient Service	Date Effective: January 1, 2018
Approved By: Executive Director	Date Revised: January 28, 2025
Specific to: All Staff	Next Review Date: As Needed

POLICY:

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Patient Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

All goods and services provided by Summerville Family Health Team (SFHT) shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

PROCEDURES:

- This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at the premises leased and operated by SFHT.
- This policy applies to employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of SFHT, including when the provision of goods and services occurs off the premises of SFHT such as in: delivery of home visits, off-site training and presentations, and meetings with outside agencies.
- The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only apply to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises leased and operated by SFHT.
- This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of SFHT's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

DEFINITIONS:

Assistive Device

An Assistive Device is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that patients bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability

The term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- 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 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.

Guide Dog

Is a highly trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are visually impaired.

Service Animal

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

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

Service Dog

As reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a servicedog for a person with a medical disability;
- or the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse practitioner confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

In accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Patient Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Patient Feedback
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

A. **The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities:**

SFHT will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are

consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all patients receive the same value and quality;
- allowing patients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that patients with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the patient's disability.

B. The Use of Assistive Devices:

Patient's own assistive device(s):

- Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by SFHT.
- In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a patient with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the patient is in a location that would be considered safe for both the patient and SFHT. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the patient.

Assistive devices provided by SFHT:

- The following assistive devices are available on a first come, first serve basis and upon request, to assist patients in accessing our goods and services:
 - Wheelchairs

C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs:

A patient with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

Exclusion Guidelines: If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below), SFHT will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee.)

Applicable Laws: *Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario*: If there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (e.g. pit bulls) and a provision of a by-law passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans on these breeds prevails.

Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:	<p>If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the patient for reasons relating to his or her disability, SFHT may request verification from the patient. Verification may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter from a physician or nurse practitioner confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to a disability; • a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or, • a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.
Care and Control of the Animal:	The patient that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for always maintaining care and control of the animal.
Allergies:	If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, SFHT will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. The Use of Support Persons:

If a patient with a disability is accompanied by a support person, SFHT will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the patient is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the patient and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations, SFHT will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue when notified by the patient that there is an issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the patient, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

E. Notice of Service Disruptions:

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of SFHT. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that patients with disabilities rely on to access or use SFHT's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known. Notifications will include:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

When disruptions occur, SFHT will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the SFHT website;
- contacting patients with appointments;
- verbally notifying patients when they are making an appointment; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

F. Patient Feedback:

We will inform our patients of the choices available for them to give feedback.

Feedback may be provided:

- in person
- by telephone/TTY
- in writing
- by email, or,
- by any other communication technology as required

If patients with disabilities would prefer to give their feedback, and receive a response to it, using an alternate method than the one offered, they may request it.

Patients can submit feedback to the Executive Director.

Patients that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

G. Training:

Training will be provided to:

- a) all employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of SFHT; for example: vendors, and third-party agents; and,
- b) those who are involved in the development and approval of patient service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- A review of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Patient Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - o use assistive devices;
 - o require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
 - o require the use of a support person
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- SFHT's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible patient service to patients with disabilities.

Training Schedule:

SFHT will provide training as soon as practical. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or act on our behalf at orientation. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.