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Implementation: November 25, 2011	Review:
Revision:	Approved By: Board of Directors

POLICY

The London InterCommunity Health Centre (the Health Centre) is committed to achieving a fully accessible organization. To achieve this commitment, all the Health Centre staff, consultants, volunteers and students share in the responsibility for advancing accessibility by playing unique and important roles in removing and preventing barriers to participation.

The Health Centre strives at all times to provide its programs in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. The Health Centre is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access and benefit from the same programs and services, in the same place and in a similar way as other service users.

This policy outlines the Health Centre's responsibilities in providing programs and services to people with disabilities in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (2005), Accessible Customer Service Standard.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all the Health Centre staff, contractors, volunteers and students (collectively referred to as "personnel").

DEFINITIONS

A disability, as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, includes physical, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities. Disabilities come in many different forms, sometimes obvious and sometimes not. Disabilities may be visible or invisible, they may differ in severity, and the effects of a disability may be continuous or intermittent.

For example:

- A person with a brain injury has a disability that is invisible.
- A person with arthritis has a disability that over time may become more severe.
- A person with multiple sclerosis has a disability that may sometimes affect daily routine and other times not.

The impact of a disability affects the person's ability to access services, assistive devices, transportation, education and employment.

PROCEDURES

The Health Centre is committed to excellence in serving all program participants, including people with disabilities. This commitment is demonstrated in a variety of ways that are detailed below.

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1. Communication:

- 1.1 The Health Centre personnel shall communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability by asking how they can help and taking guidance from the person with whom they are communicating.

2. Telephone Services:

- 2.1 Accessible telephone service is provided to service users within the scope of the Health Centre's resources.
- 2.2 When communicating with program participants, personnel shall speak clearly and at a pace the person can understand.
- 2.3 If telephone communication is not suitable to a person's communication needs or is not available, communication with service users can be done through secure e-mail, written means, or relay services and TTY services where a TTY machine is available.

3. Assistive Devices:

- 3.1 Personnel are responsible for identifying the types of assistive devices program participants may use while accessing the Health Centre programs and developing a familiarity with these devices.

5. Use of Service Animals:

- 5.1 The Health Centre welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- 5.2 At no time shall a person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal be prevented from having access to their service animal while on our premises.

6. Use of Support Persons:

- 6.1 The Health Centre welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- 6.2 At no time shall a person with a disability, who is accompanied by a support person, be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.
- 6.3 Support persons who participate in a program for the purposes of supporting a person with a disability shall not be charged a fee.

7. Notice of Temporary Disruption:

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- 7.1 In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption, the Health Centre shall provide program participants with as much advance notice as is reasonable.
- 7.2 This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- 7.3 The notice shall be placed on the Health Centre's website, at all public entrances and at reception counters on the Health Centre premises. If participants will not reasonably have access to notifications through these means, personnel shall make every effort to contact them by phone or e-mail to inform them of the disruption.

8. Training for Personnel:

- 8.1 The Health Centre shall ensure that all staff, contractors, volunteers and students who deal with the public or other third parties on its behalf have received training about accessible customer service requirements.
- 8.2 The following people/positions shall take lead responsibility with respect to this:
- The Executive Director shall ensure that Team Leads and Managers are aware of their responsibility to ensure that staff members have undergone training as part of their orientation. This is listed on the orientation check sheet. Resources are provided via online training.
 - The direct supervisor (Team Lead or Manager) shall ensure all staff have undergone training as part of their orientation to their employment with the Health Centre.
 - Program Staff shall ensure all volunteers have undergone training as part of their orientation to their position.
- See link to training below.
- 8.3 Training shall include the following:
- the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard
 - how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
 - how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
 - how to use the TTY (if applicable for their role)

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- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Health Centre's programs
- The Health Centre's policy on accessible customer service.

This training shall be accessed electronically at the following web site:

Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/serve-ability/splash.html>

8.4 Staff, students and volunteers shall report completion of this training to the appropriate person, as indicated in section 8.2, within three months of their date of hire/placement.

9. Feedback, Complaints and Questions:

9.1 Feedback, complaints and questions shall be addressed according to the Health Centre's *Complaint* policy and procedures.

10. Modifications to Policies:

10.1 All policies about the Health Centre shall respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Any that do not shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors and a decision shall be made about whether it shall be modified or removed.

Other web sites of interest include:

How May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities

<http://www.redwoodlearning.com/rcc/>

Ontario Interpreting Service

<http://www.chs.ca/en/> and click on Ontario

Captioners

<http://www.productionhub.com/> and click on directory

Braille

www.canadianbraillepress.com