



ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP

**2011-2012
Annual Accessibility Plan
for
St. Joseph's Care Group
September 2011**

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This publication is available on the St. Joseph's Care Group website.
(www.sjcg.net)

Alternate formats are available upon request

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) received Royal Assent in June 2005. The purpose of the legislation is to develop, implement and enforce standards in order to achieve accessibility for all Ontarians. Until all the new standards under the AODA are introduced as regulations, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) remains in effect. One of the requirements of the ODA is that all hospitals prepare an annual accessibility plan, and that the plan be made public.

This is the ninth accessibility plan prepared by the Accessibility Advisory Committee of St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG). The plan describes the measures that St. Joseph's Care Group has taken in the past year and the measures that will be taken during the next year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities include those who live, work or use the facilities and services at St. Joseph's Care Group.

Many of the barriers identified in the 2010-2011 plan were successfully addressed, along with other barriers identified by staff and clients throughout the year.

PREAMBLE

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), received Royal Assent in June 2005. The purpose of the legislation is to develop, implement and enforce standards in order to achieve accessibility for all Ontarians. The standards are to establish measures, policies, practices or other requirements for the identification and removal of barriers to accessibility. The Act includes a 20 year timeframe for implementation, with improvements to be introduced in five year stages.

The AODA is more expansive legislation than the original Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA), as it covers organizations in the private and the public sectors. Standards have been developed to address the full range of disabilities – including physical, sensory, mental health, developmental and learning. Ontario's first accessibility standard came into effect on January 1, 2008. The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) outlines what must be done to ensure the provision of accessible customer service to people with various disabilities. SJCG demonstrated compliance with this standard as of January 1, 2010.

The new Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) under the AODA came into force on July 1, 2011. This regulation combines accessibility standards designed to remove barriers in three areas:

- *Transportation* – making it easier for people with disabilities to get where they need to go.
- *Information and Communication* – giving people with disabilities access to more of the information that we all depend on.
- *Employment* – expanding Ontario's labour pool and welcoming more people with disabilities into more workplaces.

The regulation sets out the requirements for each of the three standards, as well as general requirements that apply to all, such as:

- developing accessibility policies and plans
- training employees and volunteers, and
- considering accessibility when purchasing goods or services.

The requirements of the standards will be phased in between 2011 and 2021.

Work is continuing on the development of the Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment. Until all the new standards under the AODA are introduced as regulations, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) remains in effect. Government ministries and other affected public sector organizations are required to develop and make public an annual accessibility plan in accordance with the ODA.

AIM

This ninth accessibility plan describes the measures that St. Joseph's Care Group has taken in the past year and the measures that will be taken during the next year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities include those who live, work or use the facilities and services at SJCG.

OBJECTIVES

This plan:

1. Reviews the initiatives undertaken in the past year at St. Joseph's Care Group to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Identifies the barriers that St. Joseph's Care Group will review in the upcoming year and describes the measures that will be taken to address the identified barriers.
3. Describes the processes St. Joseph's Care Group will take in the coming year to continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

DESCRIPTION OF ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP

Programs and services are provided throughout the community and at 8 sites, including: Balmoral Centre, Behavioural Sciences Centre, Hogarth Riverview Manor, Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital, Sister Margaret Smith Centre, St. Joseph's Health Centre, St. Joseph's Heritage and St. Joseph's Hospital.

These facilities are operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, sponsored by the Catholic Health Corporation of Ontario and managed by a local volunteer Board of Directors.

St. Joseph's Care Group's broad program areas are: Complex Care & Physical Rehabilitation Services, Mental Health & Addiction Services, and Long-Term Care Services.

SJCG has approximately 1700 employees, 400 volunteers and an annual operating budget over \$125M.

Our current Mission and Vision Statements, which provide the direction for the programs and services we offer, also provide the impetus to reduce barriers for people with disabilities who interact within St. Joseph's Care Group.

Our Mission

St. Joseph's Care Group is a Catholic Organization committed to provide compassionate and holistic care and services to the people of Northwestern Ontario.

Our Vision

St. Joseph's Care Group will identify and respond to the unmet needs of our region as a way of continuing the healing mission of Jesus in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie.

Our Values

- Commitment
- Compassionate and Holistic Care
- Dignity & Respect
- Excellence
- Faith-Based Care
- Inclusiveness
- Truthfulness & Trust

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

St. Joseph's Care Group Accessibility Advisory Committee has the responsibility of responding to obligations as outlined in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and monitoring the implementation of standards under the AODA. The Committee met regularly over this past year to review progress in implementing the 2010-2011 Accessibility Plan and to continue to address other barriers identified throughout the year.

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

| Committee Member | Area | Contact Number |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Geri Vainionpaa, Chair | Director – Learning, Research & Professional Practice | (807) 343-2499 |
| Glenn Berst | Director – Building Services | (807) 343-2414 |
| Allison Hill | Coordinator – Recruitment & Retention | (807) 346-5240 |
| Stephanie Schurr | Occupational Therapist | (807) 624-3451 |
| Doug Demeo | Vice-President – Human Resources | (807) 343-2424 |
| Shelley Peirce | Manager – Occupational Safety/WSIB Claims | (807) 343-4345 |
| Sharron Owen | Manager – Community Relations | (807) 768-4440 |
| Loretta Turpin | Coordinator - Volunteer Services | (807) 343-2428 |
| Ernie Pasternak | Supervisor – Building Services | (807) 625-1101 |
| David Vaccher | Manager – Building Services – LPH | (807) 343-4304 |

COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

In addition to our corporate policy, which formalizes our commitment to reducing barriers for people with disabilities, our commitment is evident in the initiatives we have completed over this past year. Our staff continues to recognize that improving accessibility is a shared responsibility and assist in identifying barriers and solutions, not included in the formal plan, throughout the year.

Accessible Thunder Bay

SJCG has continued linkages with other organizations in Thunder Bay that are required to prepare annual accessibility plans. **Accessible Thunder Bay** is a group comprised of representatives of the Accessibility Committees for Lakehead University, Confederation College, Lakehead District School Board, City of Thunder Bay, St. Joseph's Care Group, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board. Formed in January 2004, the group formalized terms of reference this year confirming that it is a voluntary, self-directed group interested in sharing information and strategies to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in the respective organizations represented and the City of Thunder Bay as a whole. This includes:

1. Sharing information and resources to improve accessibility in the respective organizations and to facilitate consistency in approaches, where possible.
2. Sharing ideas and experiences in implementing the Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) within the respective organizations.
3. Looking for areas of collaboration in meeting the requirements of the AODA Standards.

Accessible Thunder Bay is currently looking at strategies for updating **Access Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay's Guide to Accessible Community Services for Persons with Disabilities** to ensure current information and consistent formatting for all organizations. This accessibility directory lists the accessibility features of all SJCG sites and the other public sector organizations represented on the Accessible Thunder Bay work group. Contact information for the SJCG Accessibility Committee is also included in the guide, making it easy for individuals to make contact if there are concerns about accessibility at any SJCG sites. The SJCG Accessibility Advisory Committee received feedback this year that the Guide is a good reference for our clients who are looking at recreational options in the community.

As part of our responsibility to share our accessibility plans with the public, SJCG continues to jointly advertise in the Chronicle Journal newspaper and produce posters informing the public where they can access our respective plans.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee continue to advocate for clients and educate themselves on best practices for implementing the new standards and removing barriers for people with disabilities. The Committee Chair attended an Ontario Hospital Association sponsored conference on Accessibility: Putting Policy into Practice in

November 2010. The conference included a range of sessions including human resources and accessibility; the economic impacts of increased accessibility in Ontario; consumer perspectives on accessibility in healthcare; and updates from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee toured the space being renovated for the relocation of Diabetes Health Thunder Bay. No major areas of concern related to accessibility were identified. Committee members were assured that automatic door openers would be installed on the two washrooms with the plan to move the door openers from the current location to the new space.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee investigated concerns that our contracted taxi service cannot accommodate wide width wheelchairs. After further discussion on this issue it was agreed that clients in wide width wheelchairs are likely better served using Ambutrans, as they do now, being assisted by trained staff with a larger scope of services and custom vehicles.

BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES – 2010-2011

The following table reflects the barriers identified in last year's accessibility plan and the status in reducing the barriers.

| Type of Barrier/Related Standard | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | General physical/ environmental barriers identified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25,000 was allocated to address barriers within St. Joseph's Hospital. This included the Algoma St. entrance renovations and the Health Records reception counter listed on page 6. • \$10,000 was allocated to address barriers at each of St. Joseph's Heritage, Hogarth Riverview Manor and PR Cook Apartments. Some of these funds were used to install automatic door openers and paint door frames with contrasting colour at Behavioural Sciences Centre |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Doorway widths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain interior doors were identified as presenting a barrier for larger width wheelchairs (e.g. door to rehab clinics). Adequate door widths will generally be given priority within available funding. Costs have been obtained and two doors have been identified to be widened in the 2011-2012 budget. |

| Type of Barrier/Related Standard | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | St. Joseph's Hospital Algoma St. entrance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrance was renovated to accommodate wide width wheelchairs. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Health Records reception counter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half-door reception counter was modified to allow access for people in wheelchairs. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Automatic door openers – St. Joseph's Hospital in-patient units | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of some doors on in-patient units being closed and presenting a barrier for some clients on the unit was investigated. It was determined that the doors were sometimes left closed after closing automatically with power surges. They are also closed on occasion to deter some clients from wandering off the unit. The issue was discussed by unit managers with a commitment to ensure all problem-solving has occurred to manage wandering clients and to reinforce with staff that fire doors should not be closed. Automatic door openers cannot be put on these doors. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Ramp grade to gym – 1 st floor St. Joseph's Hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility and costs to reduce the grade of this ramp, which can be difficult to negotiate by clients in wheelchairs or ambulatory clients requiring a gait aid, was carried out this year. This project will be completed with the 2011-2012 budget. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Automatic door opener placement – south entrance St. Joseph's Hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatic door openers will be made more visible with signage indicating which button opens which door. Costs have been obtained and this will be completed with the 2011-2012 budget. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Paper towel dispensers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility and costs of installing the most "accessible" hand drying option with priority given to public washrooms (including hands-free paper towel dispensers or blower type hand dryers) was explored this year. Hands-free paper towel dispensers were identified as a good and less expensive option |

| Type of Barrier/Related Standard | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|--|--|--|
| | | <p>than blower type hand dryers. Paper towel dispensers also meet infection control criteria. Costs have been obtained and this initiative will be further explored through the Product Evaluation Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions were held with the Manager – Material Management around the need to develop general criteria for assessing accessibility features in the product selection process for all products. As different products would have different potential accessibility features it was recognized that a generic statement may not be adequate. It was recommended that our internal Occupational Therapists be consulted related to accessibility features. This is an area that must be addressed by January 1, 2013 as one of the requirements of the new Integrated Accessibility Standards. Accessibility criteria must be incorporated into procurement of goods, services and facilities. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Adequate ground level accessible parking near St. Joseph's Health Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As this did not continue as an issue this past year no discussions were held with the City of Thunder Bay representatives regarding the potential of adding more accessible parking spaces near St. Joseph's Health Centre. |
| INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION | Signage and Way-finding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional signage was added on the first floor, St. Joseph's Hospital to improve way-finding. Staff continue to express concerns and more signage may be needed. The feasibility of having a volunteer reception desk to assist clients/visitors with way-finding was explored. It was determined that the volume of traffic is too low to warrant a volunteer with way-finding. |

| Type of Barrier/Related Standard | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|--|--|--|
| INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION | Web-site and internal iNtranet may not be accessible to people who are visually impaired or blind or who use screen-reading software | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The external web-site was built to be compatible with accessible software. Manual accessibility features that can be accessed by visitors to the web-site will be added. |

In addition to the barriers identified in last year's plan, a number of other barriers have been addressed, based on suggestions brought forward by staff and clients.

- Touchless taps were installed in the public washrooms outside of St. Joseph's Hospital cafeteria as a trial assessment of ease of use and maintenance of the brand selected.
- Pay for use transport wheelchairs were placed at the Algoma St. entrance of St. Joseph's Hospital. The chairs provide transport for those with limited mobility and the pay for use concept, with payment returned when the chair is returned, assures the chairs are returned to the location for use of others.
- The issue of awareness and responsibility for storing equipment purchased for staff to reduce barriers and improve accessibility was raised. As a result an inventory of accessibility equipment purchased to accommodate staff with disabilities has been created and will be maintained through Occupational Health. This master list can be used to identify equipment that may not be in use and can be used by other employees if needed. It will also be a resource for others looking for equipment to accommodate staff.
- Canadian Institute for the Blind (CNIB) representatives were invited to PR Cook Apartments to tour and give input to improve the common areas and apartments for those with low vision or other vision issues. The representatives provided very positive feedback and provided some low technology ideas to assist our tenants with low vision including templates that allow tenants to see the temperature on their thermostats.
- The Rheumatic Diseases Program had a bench/chair made for use in the pool to allow clients to sit and complete pool exercises if they are unable to stand.
- St. Joseph's Health Centre purchased furniture for the waiting rooms appropriate for people who weigh more than 350 pounds (bariatric clients).
- Staff worked to find a solution to allow a client in a wheelchair, who required toileting with a hoier lift and stretcher, to attend a six week full-day program in the Chronic Pain Management Program. Special arrangements were made to allow the client and her support worker to use an area on the in-patient unit. As a result, she was able to complete the six week program.

BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGIES: 2011-2012

As part of developing our accessibility plan we continue to ask staff and clients to contact a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee if they identify barriers that need to be addressed. As noted above, improvements continue to be made based on this input.

On a broad scale, a comprehensive physical/architectural accessibility audit was conducted at St. Joseph's Hospital, Diabetes Health, Balmoral Centre and St. Joseph's Heritage in 2004. The audit continues to be a resource as we plan for additional barrier removal activities at various sites. All priority 1 items identified in the audit, that could be accomplished at relatively low cost and/or through routine maintenance, have been addressed.

The new Sister Margaret Smith Centre opened in September 2009. Accessibility features were incorporated into the building design including accessible washrooms, automatic door openers, improved width doorways and colour coordination. In addition an accessible bedroom was included in each of the adult male, female and youth residential areas.

Design plans for both the new mental health wing of St. Joseph's Hospital and the Centre of Excellence for Integrated Seniors' Services include accessibility features.

As we make changes to the physical environment we will look to the initial proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard, which describes how the built environment can be configured to prevent the creation of new barriers for persons with disabilities. The initial proposed Standard includes requirements for over 70 elements (e.g. entrances, interior routes). These are to be applied, with limited exceptions, to all new built environment construction and to all renovations of existing built environment construction. The Standard will be phased in; however, publicly funded buildings, such as hospitals will be among the first to have to comply.

BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

These barriers will be further investigated/addressed in the 2011-2012 year and plans implemented to reduce or remove the barriers. Costs will be considered when identifying barrier removal solutions. The following table identifies the standard that the strategy addresses under the new and impending AODA standards.

| Type of Barrier/Related Standard | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | General physical/ environmental barriers identified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25,000 has been allocated to address barriers within St. Joseph's Hospital. • \$10,000 has been allocated to address barriers at PR Cook Apartments at St. Joseph's Heritage. Current priority items include an automatic door opener on one of the lounge doors and taps on the laundry room wash tubs |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Doorway widths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain interior doors have been identified as presenting a barrier for larger width wheelchairs (e.g. door to rehab clinics). The Seating |

| Type of Barrier/Related Standard | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | | Clinic door and the washroom in the immediate vicinity of the Clinic have been identified as the first doors to renovate (cost \$5,500/door) |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Parking - St. Joseph's Hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible parking spaces at St. Joseph's Hospital will be impacted with the demolition of the old Sister Margaret Smith Centre and the upcoming build of the new east wing. This will be brought to the Specialized Mental Health Rehabilitation Project Steering Committee for discussion. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Washroom taps and toilets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of touchless taps and toilets in all washrooms is seen as an accessibility, infection control and greening initiative. This item will be brought to the MHRP and CEISS Steering groups by Leadership Team for consideration in planning for the new buildings. • The Director, Building Services will develop a multi-year plan and submit a budget to gradually upgrade taps and toilets in the existing buildings. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Ramp grade to gym – 1 st floor St. Joseph's Hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramp modifications will be carried out that will reduce the slope by one-third. (cost \$3,500) |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Automatic door opener placement – south entrance St. Joseph's Hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The automatic door openers will be made more visible with signage indicating which button opens which door. (to be completed internally) |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Paper towel dispensers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-free paper towel dispensers to be installed in washrooms, with public washrooms as the first priority. |
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | Parking lot (corner Van Norman and Algoma) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with assistive devices (e.g. walkers) are not able to get around the newly installed entry/exit arms without ducking underneath or having to go up on to a curb. Costs to alter the concrete pad and fence will be obtained. |

| Type of Barrier/Related Standard | Description of Barrier | Strategy for Removal/Prevention |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| BUILT ENVIRONMENT | St. Joseph's Hospital Algoma St. and Camelot St. entrances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roadways of these two entrances will be widened to two lanes to allow vehicles to pass each other. This will improve access to the building as construction of the east wing will limit entrances. |

Integrated Accessibility Standards Implementation

The new Integrated Accessibility Standards (Regulation 191/11) under the AODA came into force on July 1, 2011. Over the next year the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be focusing on the requirements of the Standards. A plan has been submitted recommending an approach to work through the requirements of the regulation to ensure compliance by the target dates. Based on the specific requirements, certain internal departments and corporate quality committees have been identified as having primary responsibility for working on implementation of the Standards. This approach reinforces the need to make accessibility one of the many facets to consider when we are implementing or revising policies and processes, purchasing goods and services and considering the ways we communicate with our multiple stakeholders.

The most immediate compliance date is January 1, 2012 in two areas related to accessible formats and communication supports for communication of emergency procedures, plans and responses for the public and employees with disabilities.

Development of A Multi-year Accessibility Plan

The new Standards require the development of a multi-year plan outlining the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers by January 1, 2013. Development of the plan requires the input of people with disabilities and it must be updated, at minimum, every five years. The plan must be posted on the web-site along with annual updates outlining progress made over the previous year.

Guiding the process for the development of the multi-year plan will be a priority for the Accessibility Advisory Committee over the next year. It is anticipated that the elements of the multi-year plan will address the elements outlined in the Regulation with compliance dates from January 1, 2013 through January 1, 2015 with the majority of elements requiring compliance by January 1, 2014.

MONITORING PROCESS

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will continue to meet on a regular basis to review progress on eliminating or reducing the barriers noted above and monitor the implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards. The Committee will be responsible for reminding staff and the various committees of their role in implementing the plan.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will provide regular reports to the Human Resources Committee, ensuring that the SJCG Leadership Team is kept apprised of activity throughout the year. The Committee will also continue to monitor the implementation of the final standard under AODA, the Built Environment Standard, and provide input into implementation within SJCG.

COMMUNICATION OF THE PLAN

St. Joseph's Care Group's accessibility plan will be posted on SJCG web-site at www.sjcg.net and on the iNtranet. Paper copies will be available at all sites and through the Community Relations and Administration offices. On request, the plan can be made available (English or French) in alternative formats, such as computer disk, large print or Braille.

Additional information on St. Joseph's Care Group Accessibility Plan can be obtained from the Communications office at (807) 768-4440.