



ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP

**2009-2010  
Annual Accessibility Plan  
for  
St. Joseph's Care Group  
September 2009**

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This publication is available on the St. Joseph's Care Group website.  
([www.sjcg.net](http://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 seventh 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 2008-2009 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 are being 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 we must do to ensure we are providing accessible customer service to people with various disabilities. As a public sector organization we must be in compliance with the standard by January 1, 2010.

Work on the development of other Standards under the Act continues and are in different stages of development. Additional Standards are being developed related to:

- *Transportation* – The final proposed standard has been submitted to the Minister of Community and Social Services.
- *Information and Communication* – The final proposed standard has been submitted to the Minister of Community and Social Services.
- *Built Environment* – The initial proposed standard was released in July 2009.
- *Employment* – The initial proposed standard underwent public review from February to May 2009.

The work of these committees can be reviewed at the Ministry of Community and Social Services web-site at:

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/>.

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. When new standards under the AODA are in place, the older legislation will be repealed. The AODA is presently undergoing a mandatory, independent review being led by Charles Beer.

## **AIM**

This seventh 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**

St. Joseph's Care Group continues to meet the needs of the community in the areas of:

- Mental Health & Addictions
- Complex Care & Physical Rehabilitation
- Long Term Care & Supportive Housing
- Community Services

We are located on nine sites, with an annual operating budget of \$125 million and approximately 1700 employees. Our sites include:

- St. Joseph's Hospital
- St. Joseph's Heritage
- St. Joseph's Health Centre
- Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital
- Hogarth Riverview Manor
- Sister Margaret Smith Centre
- Balmoral Centre
- Behavioural Sciences Centre
- Diabetes Health Thunder Bay

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 St. 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 our 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 2008-2009 Accessibility Plan and to continue to address other barriers identified throughout the year.

### **Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee**

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Geri Vainionpaa, Chair	Manager – Learning, Research & Professional Practice	(807) 343-2499
Glenn Berst	Manager – Building Services	(807) 343-2414
Allison Hill	Coordinator – Recruitment & Retention	(807) 343-2466
Stephanie Koegler	Occupational Therapist	(807) 343-2432 ext 2648
Doug Demeo	Vice-President – Human Resources	(807) 343-2424
Nicole Tittley	Coordinator – Infection Control and Safety	(807) 343-2496
Sharron Owen	Manager – Community Relations	(807) 768-4440
Loretta Turpin	Coordinator - Volunteer Services	(807) 343-2428
Jean Beyko	Supervisor – Environmental Services	(807) 625-1102

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
David Vaccher	Manager – Building Services – LPH site	(807) 343-4304
Susan Marcin	Team Leader – The Manor House Adult Day Program	(807) 768-4454

## **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.

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 Public Schools, City of Thunder Bay, St. Joseph's Care Group, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Thunder Bay District Catholic School Board. Formed in January 2004, this group continues to meet regularly to share information and resources, in an effort to better serve our various communities. As part of our responsibility to share our accessibility plans with the public we jointly advertise in the Chronicle Journal and produce posters informing the public where they can access our respective plans.

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee continued to advocate for clients and staff with disabilities by attending public input sessions on the draft employment and information/communication standards. This year, SJCG is also proud to be the presenting sponsor for the 2009 Recreation-Able Inclusive Recreation Forum being held in Thunder Bay. This conference will target recreation and leisure professionals from across Ontario who will come together to learn new concepts and innovative plans designed to improve accessibility and increase inclusive opportunities to recreation for people with disabilities.

### ***Customer Service Standard Implementation Planning***

A significant portion of the committee's work this past year has focused on identifying what must be in place to ensure our compliance with the Customer Service Standard. SJCG must be compliant with the requirements of the Standard by January 2010 and complete compliance reporting by March 2010.

SJCG collaborated with the Accessible Thunder Bay work group in the review of the new Customer Service Standard, sharing information, policies, practices and training approaches that must be in place to be compliant with the Standard. Although variations are required depending on the type of service each organization offers, it will be advantageous to individuals with disabilities to have similar processes for accessing services across all of our organizations.

The following outlines the work that has been completed or is under development related to the implementation of the standard:

- Under the leadership of the City of Thunder Bay, **Access Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay's Guide to Accessible Community Services for Person with Disabilities** was developed in 2008. This accessibility directory, updated this year, 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 included in the Guide, making it easy for individuals to contact us if there are concerns about accessibility at any of our sites. The Guide is available in paper format and can be accessed electronically from the City of Thunder Bay web-site and SJCG iNtranet. The Guide is one tool that helps us to meet our obligations under the Customer Service Standard, by providing the public with information on our level of accessibility and contact information if there are concerns or compliments.
- The ACCESS ON web-site has been provided as a link from our accessibility page on the iNtranet. ACCESS ON is a web-site hosted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services with resources on how individuals and businesses can help to make Ontario more accessible. Staff will have this and other resources to enhance their knowledge of how best to provide service to people with specific disabilities.
- A presentation on the Customer Services Standard and SJCG's obligations was provided to all SJCG managers.
- Policies, as required under the regulation, are being developed. In addition to developing a policy outlining our commitment to accessible customer service existing policies on animals within SJCG and service complaints/compliments need to be/have been revised to meet our obligations.
- The standard outlines the specific training that is required by all staff that interacts with the public. On-line training options are being explored. The committee is waiting for the release of an on-line training module developed by Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), anticipating that it will have content most relevant to the Standard in relation to healthcare. In addition, a staff resource booklet is being developed.

**BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVES – 2008-2009**

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
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Identified general physical/environmental barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority 1 items identified in the 2004 architectural/physical audit have been addressed.</li> <li>• Accessibility issues are considered and addressed through routine maintenance procedures at all sites (e.g. colour contrast painting – stairs doorways) on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• \$25,000 allocated to address</li> </ul>

Type of Barrier/Related Standard	Description of Barrier	Strategy for Removal/Prevention
		barriers within St. Joseph's Hospital used to upgrade public and select client toilets with the automatic flush feature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$30,000 allocated to complete the projects identified for PR Cook Apts, Hogarth Riverview Manor and St. Joseph's Heritage as outlined below.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Inadequate space for movement of wheelchairs/other assistive devices and counter-height not wheelchair accessible in Central Registration – St. Joseph's Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counter-heights redesigned to be wheelchair accessible.</li> </ul>
<b>INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>	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"> <li>• A font re-size tool has been developed and tested and will be implemented on the new external web-site. This feature will be incorporated as a feature on the iNtranet with the next redesign.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Smoking location at St. Joseph's Hospital not very accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The smoking area was relocated to a more accessible and convenient location.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Physical barriers at LPH, as outlined in the ODA Compliance study, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for the upgrade of the public washrooms, approved by Ontario Realty Corporation, will provide an accessible unisex public washroom on the first floor, Wing A; second floor, Wing C; third floor, Wing C. Construction is expected to begin in Fall 2009.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Limited accessibility for clients and families to use the outdoor tent area on LPH grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tent has been relocated to the grounds outside of the ambulance entrance which has an automatic door opener and an accessible pathway to the grounds.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Lack of automatic door openers on the Georgian Room washrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic door openers to be installed on the two washrooms in Fall 2009.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	PR Cook Apartments elevators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevators were upgraded to improve accessibility, including installation of accessible controls at improved height and voice control features.</li> </ul>
	Lack of automatic doors into	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic doors to the hallway</li> </ul>

Type of Barrier/Related Standard	Description of Barrier	Strategy for Removal/Prevention
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	hallway leading to HRM Boardroom	were installed.
<b>INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>	Lack of amplification systems for hearing impaired clients, public and staff in general meeting rooms across all sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An FM transmission system will be installed in the new Sister Margaret Smith Centre. Information on this system will be brought forward for consideration for other areas of SJCG.</li> </ul>
<b>INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>	Need for improved communication with individuals with hearing impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A central fund for pocket-talkers was not approved. Devices can be purchased through individual service budgets.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Washroom located beside the pool at St. Joseph's Hospital not accessible for people in wheelchairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This washroom could not be enlarged due to structural limitations. Fixtures were changed to improve accessibility.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Public and client toilets difficult to flush with present lever system located at the back of the toilet, particularly if a raised toilet seat added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two dozen toilets (all public and a select few client toilets on each unit at St. Joseph's Hospital) were fitted with remote sensors for flushing.</li> </ul>

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.

- A TTY machine was purchased for St. Joseph's Health Centre.
- Direct taxi line options were updated at St. Joseph's Hospital to include a taxi service that has a full fleet of accessible vehicles.
- Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) supplied headphones for clients with hearing impairments and to maintain privacy during videoconference consults.
- An additional exterior automatic door opener was installed at PR Cook Apartments.
- An automatic door opener was installed in one apartment at PR Cook Apartments, as a trial, anticipating a future need.
- Worn carpeting in PR Cook Apartments is being replaced with linoleum to improve mobility for tenants with assistive devices such as walkers and wheelchairs.
- Raised toilets are being installed in PR Cook Apartments when they are replaced.

### **BARRIER IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGIES: 2008-2009**

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, we had a comprehensive physical/architectural accessibility audit conducted at St. Joseph's Hospital, Diabetes Health, Balmoral Centre and St. Joseph's

Heritage in 2004. All priority 1 items identified in the audit, that could be accomplished at relatively low cost and/or through routine maintenance, have been addressed. Accessibility features have been considered for the new Sister Margaret Smith Centre opening in Fall 2009 and the new mental health wing of St. Joseph's Hospital, scheduled to open in 2011. Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital and the current Sister Margaret Smith Centre will be closed when construction is complete.

Going forward, 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 2009-2010 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 or impending AODA standards.

Type of Barrier/Related Standard	Description of Barrier	Strategy for Removal/Prevention
<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	Need to improve service delivery for people with disabilities throughout Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure requirements outlined in the Customer Service Standards are met including policy development and training of all staff.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	General physical barriers identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$25,000 has been allocated to address barriers within St. Joseph's Hospital</li> <li>\$10,000 remains for projects identified at PR Cook Apartments</li> </ul>
<b>INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>	Televisions in public areas not set for closed-captioning for individuals with hearing impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend that all televisions in common areas be set for closed-captioning.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Lack of automatic door openers on the Georgian Room washrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automatic door openers to be installed on the two washrooms in Fall 2009.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Clients in wheelchairs backing out of elevators need appropriately placed mirrors to safely back out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate appropriate/approved mirror options in elevators</li> </ul>
<b>BUILT</b>	Lack of wheelchair and other accessibility features in high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss options for improving accessibility within these homes</li> </ul>

Type of Barrier/Related Standard	Description of Barrier	Strategy for Removal/Prevention
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	support housing	with the landlords.
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	Physical barriers at LPH, as outlined in the ODA Compliance study, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for the upgrade of the public washrooms, approved by Ontario Realty Corporation, will provide an accessible unisex public washroom on the first floor, Wing A; second floor, Wing C; third floor, Wing C. Construction is expected to begin in Fall 2009.</li> </ul>
<b>INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>	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"> <li>A font re-size tool has been developed and tested and will be implemented on the new external web-site. This feature will be incorporated as a feature on the iNtranet with the next redesign.</li> </ul>
<b>INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>	Lack of amplification systems for hearing impaired clients, public and staff in general meeting rooms across all sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on amplification systems similar to the system installed in the Sister Margaret Smith Centre will be brought forward for consideration for other areas of SJCG.</li> </ul>
<b>INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>	Need for improved communication with individuals with hearing impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize information sessions on options for improving communication with individuals with hearing impairments.</li> </ul>

## 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. 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 standards under Bill 118, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and provide input into the 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](http://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 Community Relations office at (807) 768-4440.