



Sault Area Hospital Annual Accessibility Status Report 2023

Prepared by:

The SAH Accessibility Committee

This publication is available on the SAH website (www.sah.on.ca) and in accessible formats upon request.

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PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

In 2013, Sault Area Hospital (SAH) created a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which was designed to foster a healthy, respectful and positive environment and to facilitate barrier-free access to all SAH goods, services and facilities. In that plan, we outlined our strategy to prevent and remove barriers and to meet the requirements set out under the provincial accessibility legislation.

The purpose of this report is to:

- (1) Provide an update on the progress of those accessibility issues identified in our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and the steps taken to address them;
- (2) Describe accessibility issues identified since the creation of that Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and in response to which improvements have already been made;
- (3) Describe accessibility issues identified since the creation of that Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for which improvements are underway or planned for the coming calendar year; and
- (4) Meet the requirement set out under subsection 4(3)(a) of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* that we create an annual status report and make that report publicly available.

This report will be made available to the public via the SAH website and in accessible formats upon request.

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Ontario government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, C. 11. This statute requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025. To guide and assist employers with the identification, prevention and removal of barriers to accessibility, 2 regulations were also developed: *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, O. Reg. 429/07 and *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, O. Reg. 191/11. This legislation contains accessibility standards governing:

- (1) Customer service;
- (2) Information and Communications;
- (3) Employment;
- (4) Transportation; and
- (5) The Design of Public Spaces.

The *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* regulation (O. Reg. 429/07) came into force in 2008. SAH is in compliance with these standards and will continue to maintain, monitor and improve upon accessibility in customer service.

The *Integrated Accessibility Standards* regulation (hereinafter “IASR”) (O. Reg. 191/11) contains the remaining standards. The IASR is now law and the requirements are being phased in over the coming years.

ABOUT SAH

Located at the hub of the Great Lakes in beautiful Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, across from our sister city of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, Sault Area Hospital (SAH) is a vital cornerstone in our community with a long, storied and proud history.

SAH began as two community hospitals, both situated on the St. Mary’s River in downtown Sault Ste. Marie—the Sault Ste. Marie General Hospital (Catholic hospital founded by the Sisters of the Cross in 1898) and the Plummer Memorial Public Hospital (founded in 1919). In 1993, the two formed a partnership becoming Sault Area Hospital. Then, in March 2011, we opened a spectacular one-site, state-of-the-art hospital.

With a total annual budget of \$260 million and operating up to 300 beds, SAH provides primary, secondary and select tertiary services to residents in Sault Ste. Marie and the district of Algoma. We provide core services in Emergency and Critical Care; Cardiac; Medicine; Surgery; Obstetrics, Maternity and Pediatrics; Mental Health and Addictions; Complex Continuing Care; and Rehabilitation.

Our regional programs include the Algoma Regional Renal Program (ARRP), which provides comprehensive renal services and is one of 26 regional renal programs across Ontario. The Algoma District Cancer Program (ADCP) offers comprehensive cancer treatment services to residents of the Algoma district. Additionally, SAH operates several programs and services in locations throughout the community.

SAH works collaboratively with our local educational institutions to provide a training site for nurses and many other allied health disciplines. We are also a training site for the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), supporting the learning of our medical learners and residents.

Sault Ste. Marie is a growing hub for health research. There are approximately 30 studies being spearheaded by physicians at SAH. In addition, SAH has a thriving Clinical Trials Department that works out of our Algoma District Cancer Program. There are approximately 30 clinical trials active at any given time, giving patients access to novel treatments for their care.

We are incredibly proud of our approximately 2050 dedicated staff, 160 active physicians and 450 volunteers who provide exemplary service to a catchment population of approximately 114,000 in the Algoma District.

SAH is a proud member of the Algoma Ontario Health Team, supporting an integrated health system focused on the unique needs of Algoma residents.

COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

All people, regardless of disability, have equal right of access to all goods, services and facilities provided by the Sault Area Hospital. SAH is committed to:

- Providing goods, services and facilities in a manner that:
 - Maintains the dignity, autonomy, respect, privacy and safety of persons with disabilities;
 - Is inclusive, sensitive and responsive to unique needs.
- Integration and equal opportunity;
- Preventing and removing barriers to accessibility;
- Meeting the standards set out under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

SAH ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

The SAH Accessibility Committee is a working group that prepares, monitors and revises the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Status Reports required under the *IASR*. Various departments across the organization are represented on this Committee and efforts are made to include representation from the broader community. The working group responsible for preparation of this plan includes representatives from:

SAH Department / Community Organization
Strategy and Business Planning
Communications and Public Affairs
Facilities Management
Clinical/Allied Health
Planning and Risk Management
Patient & Family Advisor
Community Member
Occupational Therapy
Human Resources (ad hoc)

REVIEW AND MONITORING OF PROGRESS

The Strategy and Business Planning at Sault Area Hospital is responsible for monitoring accessibility concerns within the organization. Members of the SAH Accessibility Committee will provide input on accessibility issues during the monthly Accessibility Committee meetings.

Annually, the SAH Accessibility Committee review and prepare an Annual Status Report regarding.

Annual Status Reports will be published on the SAH website upon completion.

STATUS OF ACTIONS ITEMS IN 2023 OF THE MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

SEE BELOW

Accessibility Issue	Description	Improvement	Progress
Continuous 'Accessibility' feedback gathering	Ensure that the Accessibility Committee is continuously gathering input from the community, workers and PFAC when developing as actions on the multi-year plan.	<p>The Accessibility Committee successfully launched the Report a Barrier button back in 2018, and has since received regular feedback and suggestions for removing barriers at SAH. We reviewed, responded, and remove numerous barriers in 2023 through feedback from this tool.</p> <p>The Committee has one regular PFAC community member, and one ad hoc community member to sit on the committee.</p>	Complete
Review AODA legislation for updates	Ensure that there are no new legislative requirements to consider.	There was nothing new from the Ontario government in terms of updates to legislation.	Complete
Complete AODA Desktop Audit			Complete.
Review of offsite locations for opportunities for barrier removal	Continued to work with offsite locations to audit and support the removal of barriers.	<p>Continued to work with the new Geriatric Clinic offsite location on Trunk Road with a focus on parking and accessible entrances. Worked with IDEA Systems to design an accessible ramp and new accessible parking space for the clinic. Worked directly with the landlord for the building who has committed to making the changes to make the facility more accessible.</p> <p>Continued to work with the Mental Health and Addictions department to ensure that</p>	<p>Review and recommendations are complete.</p> <p>Improvement in progress</p> <p>Complete</p>

		the new Northway Wellness Centre is fully accessible, including outside gathering areas. Provided recommendation for the main entrance, metal detector process, and hearing devices for the location. Ensured that the new facility meets AODA legislation and is barrier-free for our patients.	
Review of accessibility during emergency situations/codes	Review of emergency protocols to determine if there is an opportunity to improve accessibility during emergency events (ex. visual cue for Code Red)	Looked at potential options including lights, vibrating badges, and other tools for consideration in the future.	Complete
Review and provide input for new or reorganized onsite locations.	Ensure that the Accessibility Committee is consulted when hospital operated space is developed or redeveloped. The committee should provide feedback and input and provide attestations for the work when completed.	The committee reviewed & participated in the potential future redesign work for the Emergency Department. Although this work hasn't moved forward yet, the Accessibility Committee had input into elements of a redesign.	Complete
Prepare annual status report	Completed the annual status report for publication on the SAH website by year end.	Created on December 21, 2023.	Complete
Multi-year actuator review	Audit facilities to determine the need for door actuators and "hold opens."	Hold opens were installed in the hallway to Physio Therapy. This allowed patients or patients with staff members to easily manager doors in area. Actuator was ordered for Patient Records, and for the staff door at Ophthalmology.	Complete
Review Accessibility Policy	Reviewed policy for any potential updates needed.	No changes were required. The policy will be updated in 2024.	Complete
Support Patient Relations re: Accessibility-related concerns	Provide Accessibility-related advice and support to Patient relations Department, as required,	Supported Patient Relations by providing Accessibility-related advice when responding to Patient Concerns.	Complete and ongoing

Review parking gate signage	Review parking gate signage	Although officially compliant, we are continuing work to improve signage and lights for the outside parking machines. Much of this work was completed through the Communications Department.	Complete
Accommodation Process	Support Human Resources with AODA requirements for accommodation as needed.	Specifically provided opportunities for improvement in the removal of barriers for two SAH employees: first being hearing impaired recommendations and the other with physical door access.	Complete

FOR PLANNED ACCESIBILITY ACTIVITY FOR 2024, PLEASE SEE THE 2022-2025 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY WORKPLAN AVAILABLE ON THE SAH WEBSITE.