



Sault Area Hospital Annual Accessibility Status Report 2025

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.
- (5) 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 2100 dedicated staff, 160 active physicians and 400 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.

The SAH Accessibility Committee reviews and prepares an Annual Status Report on actions taken to remove barriers. These are published on the SAH website.

2025 COMPLETED ACTIONS FOLLOW:

Accessibility Issue	Description	Improvement / Actions Taken in 2025	Progress
Continuous “Accessibility” feedback gathering	Ensure the Accessibility Committee continues to gather input from patients, families, staff, PFAC, and the community when developing and prioritizing accessibility actions.	The Accessibility Committee continued to review accessibility-related feedback received through Patient Relations, direct observations, and committee discussions. In addition, the Committee finalized an internal Accessibility Survey in 2025. The final survey was reviewed by the Committee with minor revisions requested, and plans were made to share the survey with the Senior Leadership Team and Operations Committee prior to launch. Subject to no objections, the survey was scheduled to launch on April 7, 2025 for a two-week period, with the option to extend based on response volume. The Communications team supported promotion and marketing, and a physical paper version of the survey was made available in the front lobby to support accessibility and participation.	Ongoing
Review AODA legislation for updates	Ensure there are no new legislative requirements to consider under the AODA.	The Committee reviewed AODA legislative requirements and monitored for proposed or emerging changes. No new legislative updates requiring action were introduced by the Ontario government in 2025. The hospital completed the 2025 Accessibility Compliance Report, with CEO attestation, confirming compliance across applicable standards.	Complete

<p>Accessibility compliance reporting</p>	<p>Ensure the hospital completes and submits required accessibility compliance documentation within legislated timelines.</p>	<p>SAH completed the 2025 Accessibility Compliance Report for the Designated Public Sector. The organization confirmed compliance across all applicable standards, with the exception of website accessibility. The website exception was documented, with mitigation underway as part of a planned vendor transition, and was submitted within required timelines.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Actuator and doorway reviews</p>	<p>Audit facilities to determine the need for door actuators, push buttons, or alterations to doorways.</p>	<p>Repairs to the Diagnostic Imaging entrance actuator were completed and functionality restored. Additional actuator responsiveness concerns were identified and followed up through Facilities. Doorway access and clearance were reviewed as part of ongoing monitoring activities.</p>	<p>Complete / Ongoing</p>
<p>Signage and wayfinding improvements</p>	<p>Improve clarity and consistency of signage to support accessible navigation throughout the hospital.</p>	<p>Improvements and reviews were undertaken for ophthalmology signage, clinic exit routing from service hallways, and public corridor navigation. Clear instructions were developed and installed for adjustable-height tables in public spaces. Signage effectiveness continues to be monitored.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Built environment safety and barrier reduction</p>	<p>Identify and mitigate physical barriers or safety risks within public and clinical areas.</p>	<p>The Committee reviewed and followed up on safety concerns related to floor transitions, surface markings, and visibility of fixed structures in public corridors. Adjustments and markings were implemented where feasible, with further review planned as needed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Assistive technology – hearing loop systems	Promote and expand access to assistive communication technologies for patients and visitors.	Additional portable hearing loop systems were acquired, increasing the hospital’s inventory. The Committee worked with operational areas to identify locations suitable for use and trial, including patient-facing and clinical areas (including Cashier’s Office).	Ongoing
Review and input on new or redeveloped spaces	Ensure accessibility considerations are incorporated into planning for new or reorganized onsite or offsite locations.	The Accessibility Committee provided accessibility input into planning discussions for emerging space redesign initiatives. While some projects remain in early planning stages, accessibility considerations were documented and included.	Ongoing
Review Accessibility-related policies	Review accessibility-related policies to ensure alignment with legislation and operational needs.	Accessibility-related policies (Support Animal and Accessibility) were reviewed during 2025. No major revisions were required; however, accessibility considerations continued to inform broader organizational policy discussions and guidance provided to internal partners.	Complete / Ongoing
Support Patient Relations on accessibility concerns	Provide accessibility-related advice and support to Patient Relations as required.	The Committee and Chair supported Patient Relations by providing accessibility-related input and guidance when concerns or questions arose, supporting timely and appropriate responses.	Complete and ongoing
Development of a multi-year accessibility plan	Establish a structured plan to guide accessibility improvements beyond annual compliance requirements.	The Accessibility Committee reviewed and made recommendations for the 2025–2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, incorporating feedback from surveys, committee discussions, and monitoring activities. The plan outlines priorities, timelines, and responsibilities across multiple accessibility domains.	Complete

<p>Prepare annual accessibility summary for public posting</p>	<p>Complete an annual summary of accessibility activities for publication on the SAH website.</p>	<p>The 2025 Accessibility Committee Annual Summary was prepared to support transparency, accountability, and public awareness of accessibility initiatives undertaken during the year.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
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For planned accessibility activities beyond 2025, please refer to the 2025–2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan available on the Sault Area Hospital website.