

## **AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE**

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>

### **1. PURPOSE/BACKGROUND**

1.1 This policy sets out how Avenue Medical Centre (AMC) will provide our services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. In compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) we strive to give people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services in the same place and in a similar way as other customers, thereby allowing everyone to benefit from the same services.

### **2. SCOPE**

2.1 This policy takes into consideration individual and specific needs in our interactions with all members of the public including patients, their support workers, family members or guardians, vendors, suppliers and staff at other medical facilities.

### **3. POLICY**

#### **3.1 Communication**

- a) We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- b) We will train staff how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

#### **3.2 Telephone Services**

- a) We will train staff to communicate over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
- b) We will communicate using TTY (Bell Relay) if telephone communication is not suitable.
- c) We will communicate through a support person, or in writing.

#### **3.3 Assistive Devices**

- a) We will ensure staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, and canes that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

#### **3.4 Billing**

- a) Invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large print, e-mail.
- b) We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

#### **3.5 Service Animals**

- a) Where permissible by law we will welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.
- b) We will train staff in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

#### **3.6 Support Persons**

- a) We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Unless there is a genuine safety concern, support persons shall be allowed to accompany the customer at all times. If confidential information needs to be shared, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation.
- b) At no time will 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.

#### **3.7 Notice Of Temporary Disruption**

- a) We will post a notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services normally available to people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

## **AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE**

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>

- b) Notices may be posted in a conspicuous location on the premises, on our website, and on the local radio station if appropriate (closure).

### **3.8 Training For Staff**

- a) We will provide training to all staff who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.
- b) Training will be provided to staff who deal with members of the public upon commencement of their
- c) duties, and when policies and procedures change.
- d) Training records will be maintained in Human Resources in compliance with A.O.D.A.
- e) Training will include the following:
- i. The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the accessible customer service standard
  - ii. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
  - iii. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
  - iv. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services
  - v. Avenue Medical policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

### **3.9 Feedback Process**

- a) Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way Avenue Medical Centre provides goods and services to people with disabilities can do so in writing, in person, via e-mail or telephone.

- b) All feedback should be directed to:

Deborah Floyd, HR Manager  
Avenue Medical Centre  
221 Brant Ave  
Brantford, ON N3T 3J2  
Phone: 519-752-0970 ext 305  
Fax: 519-753-3988  
Email: [dfloyd@avenuemedical.ca](mailto:dfloyd@avenuemedical.ca)

- c) Customers can expect to hear back within 10 business days.
- d) Complaints will be addressed according to Avenue Medical Centre complaint management procedure.
- e) Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

### **3.10 Modifications to this or other policies**

- a) Modifications will be made to our policies and procedures as required by law, or due to feedback.
- b) We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

## **AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE**

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>

- c) Any policy of Avenue Medical Centre that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

#### **4. RELATED FORMS/PROCEDURES**

- 4.1 Training Records
- 4.2 Accessibility Guidelines

#### **5. DEFINITIONS**

- 5.1 The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) – AODA recognizes 7 distinct disabilities. They are:
- a) Hearing
  - b) Intellectual or developmental
  - c) Learning
  - d) Mental Health
  - e) Speech or language
  - f) Physical or mobility
  - g) Vision

#### **6. ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES:**

##### **6.1 Types of Assistive Devices people with vision loss might use:**

- a) Braille
- b) Large Print
- c) Magnification devices
- d) White Cane
- e) Guide dog
- f) Support Person, such as a sighted guide
- g) Digital Audio Players (enables people to listen to books, directions, art shows, etc.)
- h) GPS (global positioning systems), helps orient people to get them to specific destinations

##### **6.2 General Tips for interacting with people with Vision Loss:**

- a) Do not assume the individual cannot see you.
- b) Do not touch the person without asking permission.
- c) Offer your elbow to guide the person. If he or she accepts, walk slowly, but wait for permission before doing so. Lead – don't pull the person.
- d) Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment around them.
- e) Do not touch or speak to service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- f) Do not leave the person in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- g) If you need to leave the person, let them know you are leaving and will be back.
- h) Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to them, even if a support person accompanies them.
- i) There is generally no need to raise your voice because the person does not necessarily have hearing loss as well. Say your name even if you know the person well as many voices sound similar.
- j) Be clear and precise when giving directions, e.g., two steps behind you, a meter to your left, etc. Don't use "over there" or point in the direction.

## **AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE**

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>

- k) If you're uncertain about how to provide directions, ask the person how to do so.
- l) Do not be afraid or embarrassed to use words such as "see", "read", and "look." People with vision loss also use these words.
- m) When providing printed information, offer to read or summarize it.

### **6.3 Types of Assistive Devices people with hearing loss might use:**

- a) Hearing aid
- b) Paper and pen
- c) Personal amplification device (e.g. pocket talker) or FM transmitter systems (boosts sound closest to the listener while reducing background noise)
- d) Phone amplifier
- e) Relay service
- f) Teletypewriter (TTY)
- g) Hearing Ear Dog
- h) Support Person, such as a sign language interpreter

### **6.4 General Tips for interacting with people with hearing loss:**

- a) Attract the person's attention before speaking. Generally, the best way is by a gently touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of our hand.
- b) Ask how you can help. Do not SHOUT at them.
- c) Move to a well-lit area, if available, where the person can see your face.
- d) Don't put your hands in front of your face when speaking. Some people read lips.
- e) If necessary, ask if another method of communication would be easier, for example, using pen and paper.
- f) Be patient if you are using a pen and paper to communicate. American Sign Language may be the person's first language. It has its own grammatical rules and sentence structure.
- g) Look at and speak directly to the person. Address the person, not the interpreter or support person.
- h) Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Confirm that the person understands you.
- i) If the person uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area, if possible, so the person can hear or concentrate better.
- j) Don't assume that the person knows sign language or reads lips.

### **6.5 Types of Assistive Devices people with intellectual or developmental disabilities might use:**

- a) Service Animal
- b) Support Person
- c) Communication Board
- d) Speech Generating Device

#### **e) General Tips for interacting with people with intellectual or developmental disabilities:**

- f) Do not assume what the person can or cannot do.
- g) Use plain language and speak in short sentences.

## **AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE**

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>

- h) To confirm if the person understands what you have said, consider asking the person to repeat the message back to you in their own words.
- i) If you cannot understand what is being said, simply ask again.
- j) Provide one piece of information at a time.
- k) Do not interrupt or try to predict what they need or are going to say before they say it.
- l) Be supportive and patient.
- m) Speak directly to the person, not to their companion or support person.

### **6.6 Types of Assistive Devices people with learning disabilities might use:**

- a) Support Person
- b) Communication Board
- c) Alternative technology for writing, e.g. laptops, net books
- d) Personal Data Managers (stores, organizes and retrieves personal information)
- e) Scanning or reading technology
- f) Tape recorders, mini pocket recorders

### **6.7 General Tips for interacting with people with learning disabilities:**

- a) When you know someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can help them.
- b) Speak naturally, clearly, and directly to the person.
- c) Allow extra time if necessary – people may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- d) Remember to communicate in a way that takes into account the person's disability.
- e) Be patient and be willing to explain something again, if needed.

### **6.8 Types of Assistive Devices people with mental disabilities might use or need:**

- a) Service Animal
- b) Support Person
- c) Bliss board (picture boards)

### **6.9 People with mental health disabilities may have difficulty with one, several or none of these:**

- a) Inability to think clearly
- b) Hallucinations (e.g., hearing voices, seeing or feeling things that are not there)
- c) Depression or acute mood swings (e.g. from happy to depressed with no apparent reason for the change)
- d) Poor concentration
- e) Difficulty remembering
- f) Apparent lack of motivation

### **6.10 General Tips for interacting with people with mental disabilities:**

- a) Treat a person with a mental disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.

## **AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE**

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>

- b) Be patient.
- c) Be confident and reassuring.
- d) Listen carefully and work with the person to try to meet their needs.
- e) Do not interrupt or try to predict what they need or are going to say before they say it.
- f) If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to help them.

### **6.11 Types of Assistive Devices people with physical disabilities might use or need:**

- a) Elevator, Escalator
- b) Ramps
- c) Wheelchair
- d) Scooter
- e) Crutches
- f) Braces
- g) Walker
- h) Cane
- i) Support Person
- j) Personal Oxygen Tanks

### **6.12 General Tips for interacting with people with physical disabilities:**

- a) Speak naturally and directly to the person, not to their companion or support person.
- b) If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone in a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so that you can make eye contact.
- c) Ask before you help. People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things.
- d) Respect the person's personal space. Do not lean over them or on their assistive devices.
- e) Do not move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the person's reach.
- f) Do not touch assistive devices without permission. If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to:
  - i. Wait for and follow the person's instructions
  - ii. Confirm that the person is ready to move
  - iii. Describe what you are going to do before you do it
  - iv. Avoid uneven ground and objects whenever possible
  - v. Do not leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
  - vi. Let the person know about accessible features in the immediate area (i.e., automatic doors, accessible washrooms, elevators, ramps, etc.).

### **6.13 Types of Assistive Devices people with speech or language impairments might use:**

- a) Pen and Paper

## AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>

- b) Support Person
- c) Communication Board
- d) Speech Generating Device

**6.14 General Tips for interacting with people with speech or language impairments:**

- a) Do not assume that because a person has one disability, they also have another.
- b) Ask the person to repeat information if you do not understand.
- c) Try to allow enough time to communicate with the person as they may speak more slowly.
- d) Do not interrupt or finish the person's sentences - wait for them to finish.

**Assistive Devices**

Device	Operation Instructions	If assistance is required
Elevators	Individual pushes button	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up telephone inside to be connected with Extend Communications</li> <li>• Extend Communications will contact AMC Manager of Maintenance/Facility</li> <li>• Manager will investigate and call contractor for service</li> <li>• Manager will notify staff to post service disruption</li> </ul>
Automatic Door Openers	<p>Staff turns on at beginning of day, and off at end of day</p> <p>Individual presses the button to activate the door</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual notifies any staff if door doesn't activate</li> <li>• Staff investigates, turns on, or post disruption, prop door open and notify Manager of Maintenance/Facility</li> <li>• Manager to call for service</li> </ul>
Transport Wheelchairs	<p>Staff to check for damage</p> <p>Staff can offer to patient's family to assist patient</p> <p>Staff to lock wheels, open seat and hold steady while patient sits</p> <p>Family to operate</p>	<p>AMC to take it out of service</p> <p>AMC arrange for maintenance</p>
Cane	Available if requested	

Please read this policy in its entirety, and sign below to acknowledge your responsibility to understand and comply with this policy. When all staff has read and signed, please file in the area Policy Binder.

Date	Name	Initials

**AVENUE MEDICAL CENTRE**

<b>POLICY NAME: ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER: A002</b>
<b>POLICY OWNER: Human Resources Manager</b>	<b>DATE: 2013-04-01</b>
<b>REVISION/REVIEW DATE: 2014-11-20</b>	<b>PAGES: 8</b>
