



**Lakeridge
Health**

Accessibility Plan

Annual Status Report

2024-2025

Overview

Year 2 of the Accessibility Plan marked a period of strong forward movement, building on foundational activities from Year 1 and transitioning into more visible and tangible improvements for patients, families, staff, and community members. Our focus was not only on meeting AODA legislative requirements but also on embedding a proactive, justice-oriented accessibility lens in our organizational practices. Leadership from lived experience remained central to the process, ensuring that improvements were informed by insights, usability, and sustainability.

Lakeridge Health's Commitment

At Lakeridge Health, we know that in order to truly deliver patient-centred care and promote psychological safety in the workplace, everyone's accessibility needs must be considered from the start. As the largest health-care provider and employer in Durham Region, we are dedicated to ensuring equal access for all individuals with disabilities. This commitment extends not only to our patients, residents, and clients, but also to their families, our staff, physicians, and volunteers.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or AODA, aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The AODA became law on June 13, 2005, and applies to all levels of government, non-profits, and private sector businesses in Ontario that have one or more employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal, or contract).

The AODA is made up of five standards, as well as some general requirements, and they include the:

1. Customer Service Standard
2. Information and Communication Standard
3. Employment Standard
4. Transportation Standard
5. Design of Public Spaces Standard

The AODA standards are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The IASR includes, in addition to requirements specific to each standard, the following general requirements:

1. Provide training to staff and volunteers
2. Develop an accessibility policy
3. Create a multi-year accessibility plan and update it every five years
4. Consider accessibility in procurement and when designing or purchasing self-service kiosks

March 2024 – March 2025 Accessibility Plan Updates

1. Organizational Initiatives

Ongoing Implementation of Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Throughout Year 2, the 2023–2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan remained a guiding framework for accessibility efforts across the organization. Lakeridge Health ensured continued alignment by embedding the plan's timelines and deliverables into departmental workplans, accountability frameworks, and strategic reporting systems. This included periodic progress reviews, reporting to senior leadership, and consultation with the Accessibility Committee to confirm alignment with lived experience needs. This integration has created a more system-wide approach, allowing accessibility goals to be embedded into broader organizational strategies such as capital planning, patient experience, and workforce development.

Accessibility Committee Governance and Engagement

The Accessibility Committee continued to meet monthly and was enhanced by new representation from team members with disabilities. This collaboration in addition to the development of an Accessibility Working Group (Sub-committee) ensured that valuable insights that informed decision-making on project priorities, policy reviews, and design assessments. Meeting agendas included dedicated space for feedback from community advisors and staff members and provided a regular forum for monitoring progress, sharing learning, and discussing system gaps.

2. Technology, Information, and Communication

Integration of Accessibility in Patient and Family Handbooks

Accessibility-related content was successfully embedded into patient-facing handbooks across all sites. These updates included clear, user-friendly information on how to access mobility supports, navigate accessible entrances, locate barrier-free washrooms and quiet spaces, and request interpreter or accommodation services. Led by the Patient Centered Care team, this initiative was completed in collaboration with Communications, IDEAA, and frontline staff, ensuring that materials were accurate and reflective of real-world patient journeys.

3. Employment and Attitudinal Initiatives

Ongoing Support for Employees with Disabilities

Lakeridge Health continues to support staff with disabilities by fostering inclusive workplace practices, providing individualized supports where needed, and promoting a culture of respect, dignity, and accessibility across all stages of employment.

Performance Support and Accommodations

Initial exploration began on how accessibility considerations are reflected in staff-related processes. Preliminary input from various stakeholders pointed to opportunities for greater clarity and consistency in supporting individual needs. These early observations will help shape ongoing work in this area moving forward.

4. Design of Physical Spaces

Enhanced Accessibility in Patient Waiting Areas

Across multiple sites, patient waiting areas were retrofitted to include more bariatric seating and designated spaces for wheelchairs and other mobility devices. The changes were guided by inclusive design audits and feedback from patients and families who noted the physical discomfort and lack of dignity associated with prior space limitations. These enhancements ensure greater physical comfort and a more welcoming environment for all patients, particularly those with mobility and size-related needs.

Improvements to Hospital Entrances and Doorways

Multiple upgrades were completed to improve entrance accessibility. These included adjusting the height and size of power door buttons to ensure usability for wheelchair users and people with limited reach or dexterity. Opaque safety strips were applied to glass doors to assist individuals with low vision. Entrance flooring was leveled and secured to eliminate tripping hazards. Where revolving doors were the only entry option, alternative accessible doors were added to ensure equitable entry.

Improvements to Breastfeeding and Quiet Rooms

Initial improvements to breastfeeding and quiet rooms were made, including the removal of fixed chairs that obstructed handrails and pathways. Site assessments were conducted to plan for additional updates such as emergency call systems, accessible sinks and basins, and installation of sensory support kits. These multi-purpose rooms are being reimagined as trauma-informed, calming spaces for patients and caregivers who may require rest, reflection, or sensory regulation.

Outlook for Year 3 (April 2025 – March 2026)

Looking ahead, Year 3 will focus on actioning several in-progress items:

- Finalizing and launching the internal and public accessibility feedback systems.
- Completing the first major round of policy reviews and publishing updated accessibility and accommodation policies.
- Piloting the new accessibility training modules across priority teams and embedding them into onboarding.
- Continuing facility enhancements with a continued focus on accessible entrances, washrooms, parking, quiet rooms, and digital signage.

Reviewing and Monitoring the Accessibility Plan

The Lakeridge Health Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement Lakeridge Health's strategy and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on the 2024-2025 Accessibility Status Report, and on the accessibility of our programs, services, and facilities. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Anti-Racism department at inclusion@lh.ca.

The 2024-2025 Accessibility Status Report is available online in accessible PDF formats. Alternate formats, including paper copies of the 2021 Accessibility Status Report are available upon request at no charge.