



**WEST HALDIMAND
GENERAL HOSPITAL**

2019 ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

West Haldimand General Hospital (referred to as WHGH throughout this report) continues to be committed to meet the accessible needs of our patients, visitors, volunteers and staff with disabilities.

WHGH Mission: ***To ensure access to quality healthcare for everyone who enters our doors.***

In keeping with our mission, we continually strive to engage with our community and our partners to seek and act on feedback to remove barriers and provide an exceptional experience.

This report outlines the changes we have made over the last year as well as the initiatives we are working on to improve access within our facility.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. Isfan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kelly Isfan
President & CEO

PHYSICAL BUILDING

WHGH completes the Code Plus Environmental scan annually to assess what physical barriers are necessary to remove. The following has been upgraded this year.

1. We have enhanced the number of automated door openers to now include the cafeteria and the accessible public washroom on the main floor.
2. All ceiling lighting throughout the facility has been upgraded and additional lighting has been added to hallways which were found to be dark.
3. All Inpatient care beds have night lights which have been activated as well as the patient rooms have low-light floor lighting for night time.
4. Cafeteria: the flooring has been replaced with low lustre, non-slip vinyl flooring. Large support columns have been painted out in a high contrast colour to enhance their visibility. All dining tables allow access to wheelchairs.
5. The washroom in the Emergency Department was renovated to include a raised, self-flush toilet and lever faucet handles on accessible height sink.
6. In Diagnostic Imaging, the use of a high contrast wall behind the imaging devices allows for better visibility of the units for our patients.





Physical Building - Initiatives in process for 2020

1. Replace all wooden handrails with rails that meet standards for infection control as well as the addition of handrails to hallways on the main floor.
2. Installation of more grab bars in the patient washrooms on the Inpatient unit to provide enhanced safety and independence.
3. Work is presently underway on a new patient call system on the Inpatient unit.
4. A contract has been recently been awarded for upgrades to the hospital's information technology framework. This will enable the internet and intranet to comply with level AA by 2021. Work will commence once pandemic issues allow.

WAYFINDING

WHGH in consultation with the Alzheimer's Society, Literacy Canada and CNIB has embarked on a significant refresh to enhance our facility's wayfinding.

1. Signage: smaller blue font on a white background which was difficult to see because it blended in to the wall and ceiling, was replaced with larger white font on high contrast blue background. All metallic background signage was replaced with uniform large white font on high contrast blue background. Where ceiling signage was necessary, the signs were lowered to enable improved visibility.
2. Maps are located at the front lobby information desk and at the registration desk in the Emergency Department to hand out to patients and visitors. Large font and colour coding has been used to enhance ease of directing patients and visitors throughout the facility.
3. Colour: All public washrooms entry doors are painted out in the same high contrast colour. All publicly accessible departments and clinic entrances on the main floor and patient care areas are painted in a different high contrast colour. Entrances restricted to public access are painted in low contrast colour to the walls. This allows the publicly accessible areas to be highly identifiable. The public elevator area has been painted with a high contrast colour to clearly highlight the elevators.
4. Front Lobby: This area has been refreshed to reduce the amount of glare and high reflective surfaces, as well as decluttered to decrease visual over-stimulation. Bariatric and accessible seating with armrests in Senior Friendly colours and wipeable fabric is present in the lobby as well as waiting areas for Emergency, the Inpatient Unit, Physiotherapy, Diagnostic Imaging and Human Resources.



Wayfinding - Initiatives in process for 2020

1. Acting on the feedback from the Literacy Canada, the large Directory signage in the front lobby needs to replace the wording with numbers to identify what floor to find the specific departments.
2. Wayfinding continues to be an ongoing process based on feedback from our patients, families, visitors and our community partners.

NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICES

Our food services continues to make changes to improve the way our patient trays are set up to foster independence and enhance the meal experience:

1. Hard to open containers have been removed in favour of safer, easier options.
2. All cereal and fruit cups are pre-poured by staff into easier to handle small bowls. Soup now comes in an easy to handle mug.
3. Styrofoam water cups and straws have been replaced by easy-to-use individual water pitchers which include the lid as a cup.
4. Our Elder Life Volunteers have been trained to assist our patients at meal time. For patients with visual disabilities, our volunteers have been taught to use the clock method to inform the patient where their food, drinks and utensils are located on their tray and to provide companionship during the meal time.

STAFF TRAINING

All new staff and volunteers receive AODA education as well as training on the Ontario Human Rights Code during orientation. WHGH organizes separate lunch and learns and special events to continue to improve staff knowledge. Clinical staff have ongoing training in the Gentle Persuasive Approach, an evidence-based training program that helps care providers deliver person-centred, compassionate care to individuals with dementia.

Along with AODA training, all staff and volunteers have been trained in AIDET which is Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation and Thank you to enhance patient and customer communication to decrease patient anxiety, increase patient compliance and improve the patient experience.

Many of our staff have had Sensitivity training through the completion of on-line courses. This form of education is continuing into 2020.

This past year in June to celebrate Seniors Month, the hospital hosted a week-long event that included vendors providing accessible equipment and devices as well as representatives from Community programs and agencies to assist patients and visitors with their disability needs.

During this weeklong event, the Alzheimer's Society provided an exceptional educational event to staff and their family members called "Walk in Our Shoes". The program uses simulations to assist caregivers and family members to have a taste of what it is like to live with sensory impairments (visual and auditory) as well as cognitive and physical impairments.

An AODA training pamphlet was created for contractors who enter the facility.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Through the guidance of our Senior Friendly and Accessibility working group, the Elder Life program continues to evolve to enhance our patients' experience while in hospital.

At least once a week patients and their families in the waiting area of the emergency department as well as patients on our Inpatient unit are visited by Catherine and Eliza - her St. John's Ambulance Therapy dog. This program provides greater social engagement for our patients. They are engaging in conversation more, participating more in activities, and smiling more with a sense of improved self-confidence. The experience provides stress relief and distraction from pain, offering comfort and calmness to our patients.

Sensory Activity blankets and Fidget boards are used in the Inpatient Unit with patients who have various restless behaviours such as fidgeting, pacing and agitation. These behaviours can also be caused by a feeling of anxiety or boredom, communication problem or the surrounding environment. The boards are designed to maintain the dignity of aging adults with assortments of zippers, buttons and holes, a variety of different fabrics, and other familiar hardware that helps with memory and fine motor skills.

Our elder life volunteers play a vital role in the comfort of our patients through visiting, reading to them, assisting with puzzles and word finds as well as daily orientation and accompanying patients off the unit to the main floor Café or outside, weather permitting.



AODA COMPLIANCE REPORT 2019

It is mandatory that WHGH completes a provincial compliance report to confirm full compliance to the regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005.

The hospital adheres to more than 40 standards in order to provide employment and volunteer opportunities, and accessible health-care services to people with disabilities. The multi-year plan is posted on the WHGH website.

We are pleased to announce that, once again, we are in full compliance with the AODA requirements. The compliance report is also posted on the WHGH website.