

Title: Accessibility – Use of a Support Person	
Manual: Hospital Wide Master Policy	Type: Policy and Guidelines
Section: Accessibility – Use of a Support Person	Additional Sections (if indicated):
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Cross references: Consent, Accessibility – Customer Service, Accessibility – Service animals, Accessibility – Assistive Devices, Privacy and Security of Personal Health Information	
Key Words: support person, accessibility, accommodation, disabilities, mental health, communication, barrier free, barrier	

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is Mackenzie Health’s policy that people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person have access to that support person while receiving care and services by the hospital, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity, in compliance with the Accessible for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005 (AODA). We are committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

All employees, physicians, volunteers, students, contractors and all others, who have a working relationship with the hospital, will interact with people with disabilities in a manner, providing equitable care that respects dignity and independence to achieve patient and family centered care.

DEFINITIONS:

Disability:

•any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis,

amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Support Person: is a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods or services. A support person may be a paid support worker, a volunteer, a friend, or a family member. The support person does not need to have special training or qualifications. A support person may be identified as such by the person with the disability and is not required to carry or produce documentation. (AODA January 2008).

Training: Training could be provided through workbooks, videos, handouts such as fact sheets or brochures at an orientation session, through a mandatory online module, in a classroom setting or other format. (Compliance Manual: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 p. 28). manner, providing equitable care that respects dignity and independence to achieve patient and family centered care.

GUIDELINES:

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed on hospital premises with his/her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his/her support person while on our premises, unless it is a controlled access area, including but not limited to surgical suites, procedure rooms, Post Anaesthetic Care Unit (PACU) and recovery rooms.

The hospital may limit a support person's access to their charge on the basis of medical or safety considerations. For example, if a designated support person has a communicable illness and it is likely that they will put others at risk due to their illness, they may be denied access to their charge or to certain areas of the hospital.

If possible, situations requiring the separation of the person with a disability and their support person will be discussed with the individual in advance and appropriate measures taken. If a person with a disability is deprived of access to their support person for any reason, the hospital will assume the responsibility of providing equivalent support, as identified by the disabled person.



The hospital may also require the presence of a support person, if it is deemed by staff that a significant amount of health and safety risk will be incurred by an individual with a disability attempting to access hospital services without assistance.

Support persons are not restricted to visiting hours and wherever possible are allowed unlimited access to the disabled patient. In the event of inpatient needs, sleeping arrangements will be provided to the support person in the same vicinity at no extra cost. The support person will be responsible for the cost of his or her own meals. If any additional service fees are required for a support person, notice will be provided in advance.

Special consideration may be given when the disabled patient identifies the need for their support person to be present in controlled access areas on a case by case basis given consideration to the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of the patient, until the induction of anesthesia. When required, the support person will be provided with the necessary instructions, attire and supervision to maintain the integrity of the surgical or procedural area. Following anesthesia the support person will be provided access to the PACU or recovery area.

If the support person is permitted access to a controlled access care area (surgical suites, procedure rooms, PACU and recovery areas) where exposure to confidential information of other patients may occur, staff is to be alerted to ensure such exposure is minimized. Prior to entering the controlled access area, the support person must sign a Confidentiality Agreement and adhere to privacy laws.

Where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability in situations that may involve the discussion/release of confidential information (such as Personal Health Information), informed consent must be obtained. This consent must be documented in the joint progress notes of the health record. If a different support person is used for subsequent care and services, a new consent should be obtained and documented.

REFERENCES:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. (2005). Retrieved February 5, 2010 from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Customer Service Standard 429/07. (2005). Retrieved February 5, 2010. from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm

Southlake Regional Health Centre. (2010). *Accessibility - customer service - support person policy*. Newmarket: Southlake Regional Health Centre.

APPENDIX A:

Training for staff:

Mackenzie Health will provide training to all employees, physicians, volunteers, students, contractors and all others who deal with the public.

Mandatory training will be provided to all current staff, volunteers and physicians, students, contractors and to new staff during their respective orientations to Mackenzie Health. Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. Records of all training, including content and participants will be maintained by the hospital.

Policy and Procedure Coordinator will receive training to ensure that all policies and procedures are in compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (2005).

Training will include the following:

- the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standards;
- how to identify, interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Mackenzie Health's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standards;
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- how to use or access the equipment or devices available on provider's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of accessing health care services to people with disabilities;
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services