



MUSKOKA ALGONQUIN
HEALTHCARE

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2025-2030

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Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) creates a more inclusive and accessible Ontario for people with disabilities by identifying and removing barriers to accessibility in various aspects of daily life. This legislation aims to ensure that people with disabilities can fully participate in society by establishing standards for accessibility in areas such as transportation, employment, education, information, and public spaces. By setting clear guidelines for organizations and establishing mandatory province-wide standards and regulations that support an accessible Ontario for people with disabilities, the Act supports a barrier-free environment that promotes equal opportunities and the dignity of all individuals, regardless of their abilities. The Act requires compliance with accessibility standards in customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and the built environment, including design of public spaces.

Commitment to Accessibility

Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) strives to ensure accessibility for all staff, physicians and volunteers, patients and their family members, vendors, visitors and community members at both of our hospital sites in Huntsville and Bracebridge. The organization is committed to compliance with AODA legislation to remove barriers that may stand in the way of people receiving quality care. In line with our [strategic plan and mission, vision and values](#), MAHC believes that all people, regardless of disability, have equal right of access to all goods, services and facilities provided by MAHC in a manner that maintains the dignity, autonomy, respect, privacy and safety of persons with disabilities. The organization strives to be inclusive, sensitive and responsive to unique needs while promoting integration and equal opportunity. As part of this commitment, MAHC's multi-year Accessibility Plan identifies how we identify and address barriers that people with disabilities may experience. Barriers may be classified as physical, architectural, informational or communication-based, attitudinal, and technological and related to policies, bylaws and practices.

MAHC's Accessibility Committee

MAHC maintains an Accessibility Committee that meets regularly as an advisory group to continually improve accessibility at MAHC. Its core function is to oversee the requirement to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year Accessibility Plan that outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers, and to review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years. MAHC is further committed to the requirement to prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy, including steps taken to comply with the regulation. Members of MAHC's Accessibility Committee include:

- Leanne Gray, Director of Human Resources
- Yasser Shaker, Director of Quality, Risk, Patient Experience and Interprofessional Practice
- Bev Leslie-Suddaby, Director, Ambulatory Care and Support Services
- Larry Marshall, Manager, Plant, Facilities and Security
- Katie Zammit, Manager, Women and Children's Health and Transitional Care
- Heidi Hunter, Occupational Therapist
- Allyson Snelling, Corporate Communications Officer
- Kaye Leslie, Community Member
- Amy Carriere, Executive Assistant to Vice President of People, Communications and Stakeholder Relations and Chief Human Resources Executive

Objectives, Strategies and Actions

Through this Accessibility Plan, MAHC is committed to:

- describing the process by which MAHC will identify, address, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities
- ensuring policies and practices reflect accessibility principles to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are considered
- improving barrier-free access to hospital facilities wherever possible and engaging stakeholders in improvements
- reviewing efforts on an annual basis to address and prevent barriers for people with disabilities
- outlining priority projects to identify, address, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities
- communicating how MAHC will make this Accessibility Plan available to the public

Priority Projects

Priority projects are identified through a variety of ways at MAHC. Strategies include but are not limited to:

- ongoing review of Patient Satisfaction Survey results that identify possible barriers
- ongoing review of Opportunities for Improvement submissions from staff, patients, family members, physicians, volunteers and visitors
- internal incident reporting
- submitted feedback via MAHC's [Accessibility Feedback Form](#)

The following priority projects have been identified in the multi-year accessibility plan. This list will continue to be updated as new priority projects are identified.

1. Update the organization's Accessibility Policy, consistent with the AODA, reflecting the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards
2. Develop a Recruitment Philosophy Policy for the organization
3. Update the organization's return to work process as it relates to accommodation for a disability
4. Ensure picnic tables within outdoor eating areas are compliant with standards
5. Explore renovations to create a barrier-free washroom at the Huntsville site
6. Improve compliance with the AODA education and training
7. Improve compliance with the Human Rights Code education and training
8. Review the Incident Management System for Emergency Response policy
9. Explore new approaches to wayfinding supported by modern technology
10. Review the corporate signage plan
11. File an accessibility compliance report every three years (due December 31, 2026 and 2029)
12. Develop a process/protocol for calling on hard of hearing patients in waiting areas
13. Recognize and communicate National Accessibility Week annually in May
14. Repair and repaint handrails at the main entrance to the Huntsville site

Past Accessibility Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

MAHC has a longstanding track record of improving accessibility within our facilities despite their age and constraints. The following are some of the specific projects that over the last 10 years have improved accessibility for people with disabilities:

1. Renovations to the Howland Building to create accessible washroom
2. Lowered fire pull stations at the Huntsville site
3. Installed an accessible shower on North Wing at the South Muskoka site
4. Installed signage at the South Muskoka site to direct wheelchair access
5. Redesigned the ramps at the front of the Huntsville site.
6. Repainting of yellow stripes at the end of all stairs, ramps and curbs per regular parking lot painting and maintenance.
7. Partnered with Deaf Access Muskoka for American Sign Language interpretation
8. Implemented amplifying speakers at registration desks to support those who may be hard of hearing or hearing impaired
9. Ensured MAHC website is compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA success criteria
10. Provided a mechanism to request any documents on the website in alternate formats ([Request Form for Documents in Alternate Formats](#))
11. Developed the [Accessibility Feedback Form](#) to receive comments and/or concerns about accessibility at MAHC; available on MAHC website
12. Purchased new wheelchairs with preventative maintenance program
13. Installed handrails on both sides of all stairways
14. Retrofitted the secondary entrance to the Huntsville site with an accessible automatic door opener
15. Developed wayfinding signage for the Huntsville site that use large font, alphabetical lists, and pictorial markers where appropriate
16. Enhanced accessible parking at both Huntsville and South Muskoka sites

Preventative and Ongoing Maintenance

MAHC is committed to maintaining accessible elements in all areas of the facility. Ongoing examples of maintenance include:

1. Ensuring all accessible washrooms are in working order including plumbing and access on a daily basis
2. Performing daily maintenance on power doors and ensuring they are functioning properly
3. Two-year rotation of the repainting of yellow stripes at the end of all stairs, ramps and curbs per regular parking lot painting and maintenance or as needed
4. Completing monthly elevator maintenance
5. All staff reporting to Joint Health and Safety any outdoor hazards that are identified including but not limited to broken sidewalks, broken outdoor furniture, loose ramp railings, non-functioning lighting etc
6. Maintaining condition of evacuation ramps for use if the elevators are unavailable
7. Twenty-four hours, seven days a week maintenance staff with additional emergency contacts for elevator and door maintenance

Notice of Accessible Service Disruption

MAHC will provide notice when facilities or services that people living with disabilities rely on to access our services are temporarily disrupted. In the event of a planned service disruption, notification will be provided in advance or as soon as possible. When necessary, appropriate alternative services will be provided. In the event of unplanned service disruption, notification will be provided as soon as possible after the disruption occurs. When necessary, appropriate alternative services will be provided. Notices of disruption shall be made publicly available as appropriate (e.g. MAHC website, social media channels) and shall include:

1. The name of the event/service
2. The normal service location being impacted
3. Alternate service locations
4. Alternate service methods
5. Hours of service availability
6. Contact information
7. Any other information deemed appropriate to deliver a good or service.

Communicating the Plan

This document is available on the [MAHC website](#) and in alternative formats [upon request](#).

For more information on this Accessibility Plan, please contact Leanne Gray, Director of Human Resources, at leanne.gray@mahc.ca.