

<b>Subject:</b> Accessibility	Staff
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<b>Cross Reference:</b> Client Rights; Discrimination and Harassment-free Workplace; Client Feedback; Client Complaints: General; Client Complaints: Staff; <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i>	<b>Approved By:</b> Executive Director

### Statement of Commitment

The Vaughan Community Health Centre (VCHC) is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

### 1. SERVICE PROVISION

**Policy:** In its commitment to provide accessible, high quality programs and services for its clients, including those with disabilities, the Vaughan Community Health Centre will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the following principles:

- (a) Services will be provided in a manner that respects the *dignity* and *independence* of all clients.
- (b) The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be *integrated* wherever possible.
- (c) Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity *equal* to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the programs and services provided by VCHC.

Vaughan Community Health Centre welcomes the use of assistive devices by people with disabilities. We also welcome their service animals and support persons.

## **Definitions**

**Accessible:** service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached or entered; obtainable.

**Assistive Devices:** refers to any device or mechanism that assists a person with a disability in accessing and benefitting from the services provided. Assistive devices may include but are not limited to; American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, a wheelchair, a walker, cane, assistive learning device, visual alarms or assistive software programs.

**Barrier:** anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of the disability. Barriers may include physical, architectural and attitudinal barriers, as well as information or communication barriers, technological barriers, or a policy, procedure or practice.

## **Disability:**

- a) Any degree of physical 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 impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impairment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder,
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under WSIB.

**Guide Dog:** a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the Blind Persons' Rights Act R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

**Service Animal:** an animal used by a person with a disability. It may be readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/her disability; otherwise, the person may be asked to provide documentation from a regulated health professional such as a physician, nurse, psychologist, optometrist, and mental health therapist confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person:** any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability to aid him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to programs and services.

## **PROCEDURES for Service Provision:**

### **1) Communication**

When communicating face to face with a person with a disability, staff will do so taking into account the person's disability. This may require using alternate methods of communication (large print, reading information aloud, drawing a diagram, etc.) Staff will take the time to understand the needs of each individual, will ask how they can help, and will be open to working with people with disabilities to find solutions.

### **2) Service Animals and Support Persons**

- a. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, VCHC will ensure that the person is permitted to enter the Centre with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Where a service animal is excluded by law, VCHC will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use, and benefit from our programs and services. The service animal must be under the care and control of the individual at all times.
- b. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, VCHC will welcome both persons, and ensure that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person. The program registration fee (required for fitness programs only) will not apply to the support person. VCHC may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when in the Centre, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others in the Centre.

### **3) Transportation**

- a. In an emergency situation, staff will call 911 when a client with a disability needs to be transported
- b. In a non-emergency situation, staff will ask the client what is their preferred mode of transportation. If they have no preference, staff will present options vetted by clinicians, such as:
  - Mobility Plus at 905-762-2112, or
  - Taxi Astro at 905-738-3311 or 905-850-8855

Note: Transportation of VCHC clients in personal vehicles is strongly discouraged and will not be reimbursed.

#### **4) Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions**

VCHC will provide notice of disruption of programs or services to the public.

Any notice of disruption will contain the following:

- Reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- Alternative facilities or services

Staff will provide such notice in at least one of the following three methods:

- Notice physically posted at the site of the disruption
- Notice on VCHC website
- Notice in local newspaper

Where possible, staff will also telephone clients, especially those who experience significant challenges accessing our services and programs.

## **2. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

In its commitment to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities, the VCHC will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports via our website, signage within the centre and communication materials. When asked, the VCHC will provide information and communications materials in accessible formats or with communication supports. The information will be provided to the person in a timely manner and free of cost. This includes publicly available information about our services and facilities, as well as publicly available emergency and safety information.

The Vaughan Community Health Centre will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs. In addition, the VCHC will ensure existing feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities upon request.

### **Feedback**

VCHC accepts feedback from the public using a variety of methods including:

- Phone (905-303-8490 and ask for the Executive Director, or the Programs and Services Director). In addition, members of the public can communicate their concerns to any VCHC staff person who will document the feedback -- on VCHC's feedback forms available by VCHC's feedback boxes -- pass it on to the Executive Director.
- In person (ask for Executive Director or Programs and Services Director). In their absences, feedback can be provided to any member of the VCHC staff team who will document it --on VCHC's feedback forms available by VCHC's feedback boxes-- and pass it on to the Executive Director.
- Fax (905-832-0093)

- Email ([info@vaughanchc.com](mailto:info@vaughanchc.com))
- In writing via feedback /comment boxes (Suite 106 and 206, reception area)

Feedback is also solicited in focus groups, program evaluations, and formal surveys.

All feedback is reviewed by the Executive Director or delegate. Complaints are investigated and follow up is provided to the client if requested. All complaints, comments, feedback -- and the steps taken by the VCHC to resolve them -- are brought to the attention of the Board of Directors in the annual incident report summary.

### **Notice of availability of documents**

Upon request, the VCHC will provide notice to clients of the availability of:

- the accessibility policy and procedures
- the feedback and complaints policies and procedures.

Notice of availability is provided on the VCHC web site and through other printed methods.

### **Format of documents**

When providing a copy of a document to a person with a disability, VCHC will take into account the person's ability to access the information and will provide the document or information contained in the document in a format that meets those needs as agreed upon with the person.

## **3. EMPLOYMENT**

The Vaughan Community Health Centre is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

The VCHC notifies the public -- via job postings and website -- and staff that we will accommodate disabilities during recruitment and assessment processes as well as when people are hired. When requested, accommodation will be made.

- Our job advertisements will include a statement about the availability of accessibility accommodations upon request
- When arranging an interview, accommodations will be offered and made available upon request
- When presenting a job offer, we will again include a statement about the availability of accessibility accommodations upon request

We will create an individual accommodation plan and/or workplace emergency plan for any employees with disabilities.

Our performance management, career development, redeployment, and return-to-work processes will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities. Please refer to VCHC policy 4.01.1 Accessibility – Employment for more details.

#### **4. DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES**

The VCHC will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Service-related elements like service counters and waiting areas
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible off-street parking

VCHC will put the following procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to its accessible parts of its public spaces;

- In the event of a service disruption, we will notify the public of the disruptions and alternatives available

#### **5. TRAINING**

The Vaughan Community Health Centre will provide training to its Board of Directors, staff, students and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and on accessibility aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that apply to persons with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, students, volunteers, and Board of Directors.

In addition, every person who deals with members of the public or who participates in developing VCHC's operational policies, practices and procedures regarding the provision of service to the public - including staff, volunteers, students, agents, contractors and others - will receive training regarding the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

The training will include the following information:

- a. The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, requirements of the Customer Service Regulation
- b. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities,
- c. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
- d. How to use equipment made available by VCHC to help people with disabilities to access programs and services
- e. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing VCHC's programs and services

Training will be provided to each person according to his or her needs and duties and as soon as is practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in the case of changes to policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

A record of the dates on which training is provided and the individuals to whom it is provided will be kept. Upon request, the training records can be made available.

**Modifications to this or other policies**

Any of our policies that do not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

**For More Information**

For more information on this policy, please contact LoAn Ta-Young, Director of Programs and Services at: (905) 303-8490 ext.2648 or [ltayoung@vaughanchc.com](mailto:ltayoung@vaughanchc.com)

***Accessible formats of this document are available free upon request.***