This plan, including appendices and information on our website, is available in French and/or in accessible formats upon request to the Communications Department.

Phone: 613-544-4900, ext. 53374
Email: info@providencecare.ca

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About Providence Care

Providence Care Centre (operating as ‘Providence Care’) is southeastern Ontario’s leading provider of Aging, Mental Health and Rehabilitative Care.

Fully affiliated with Queen’s University and St. Lawrence College, Providence Care is a centre for health care, education and research, and a member of the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario. Continuing the legacy of our Founders, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Providence Care is sponsored by the Catholic Health Corporation of Ontario.

Providence Care is Southeastern Ontario’s leading provider of specialized care in aging, mental health and rehabilitation. Providence Care consists of Providence Care Hospital, Providence Transitional Care Centre, Providence Manor long-term care home, Hospice Kingston, and more than 22 community based mental health and support services across the region.

VISION:
We will shape the future by redefining care in aging, mental health, and rehabilitation.

MISSION:
Providence Care, a Catholic health organization, is strengthened by the spirit and tradition of our Founders, the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul. We instill hope and enhance the quality of life of the people we serve. Through partnership and innovation, we excel in care, education and research to meet the needs of the whole person.

VALUES:
Respect & Dignity – We believe in the inherent worth and excellence of all people.
Compassion – We are sympathetic and conscious of the needs of others, and have a deep desire to respond.
Stewardship – We embrace our role in the responsible management of all that is entrusted to our care.
## Contents

About Providence Care .............................................................................................................. 2  
Contents .................................................................................................................................... 3  
About this plan ........................................................................................................................... 4  
Overview .................................................................................................................................... 4  
Definitions .................................................................................................................................. 5  
Built Environment ....................................................................................................................... 6  
Customer Service and Transportation ........................................................................................ 9  
Information & Communication ................................................................................................... 12  
Employment .............................................................................................................................. 14  
Appendices .................................................................................................................................. 16
About this plan

If you are an individual with a disability
This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan lays out Providence Care’s policy and commitment statements and illustrates how attention to accessibility is embedded into our organizational practices and procedures.

If you are an employee of Providence Care
It is your responsibility to be familiar with and comply to the policy statements, resources and procedures outlined in this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Overview

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (the “AODA” or the “Act”) addresses a history of discrimination of individuals with disabilities by ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to goods, services, facilities, accommodations, buildings, structures and premises. The Act requires that Ontario be accessible to individuals with disabilities by 2025. The following five key areas of the related standards were developed with involvement of Ontarians with disabilities and are phased in over a 20 year period:

- Built Environment
- Customer Service
- Transportation
- Information & Communications
- Employment

At the core of our Mission, Providence Care is committed to enhancing the quality of life of each person. We believe in the intrinsic worth of everyone – our clients, patients, residents, staff, volunteers and visitors to our facilities. Providence Care is dedicated to fostering a supportive environment for those with disabilities. We are committed to providing service in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This means more than just meeting our legal obligations through policies and procedures; it means that we strive to meet the unique needs of each person, each and every day. This Multi-Year accessibility plan provides an overview of our policies, our current and future actions and our organizational practices associated to each accessibility standard.

Appendix – Providence Care AODA Action Plan outlines our plan to meet the accessibility standards of the Act.
Appendix – Accessibility Barriers Report summarizes barriers that have been identified and actions in progress or taken to address the barriers.

Appendix – Policy ADM-CR-6 Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities summarizes Providence Care’s commitment to an accessible environment.

Definitions
For the purpose of this plan and to inform those that work, learn, or receive services at a Providence Care site, the following definitions apply:

“DISABILITY”* means:

(a) 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,

(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, or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

*Reference: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Built Environment

What We Believe

At Providence Care, we strive to have physical space environments that demonstrate our commitment to offer safe and barrier-free facilities for our clients, patients, residents, staff, volunteers and visitors, including those with disabilities.

Providence Care had the unique opportunity to replace our existing hospital buildings – St. Mary’s of the Lake Hospital and Mental Health Services – with a single new building, Providence Care Hospital, which opened in April 2017. The newly built facility was designed with many guiding principles and standards to make the building accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. Providence Care engaged with staff, patients, clients and the public, including persons with disabilities for input on key design concepts in the hospital.

Providence Transitional Care Centre is Providence Care’s newest facility, featuring 64 beds across two units. It opened in October 2021 and addresses a significant gap in the availability of restorative programs and other specialized services for aging, mental health and rehabilitation.

Within the constraints of our other aging buildings, we work to include accessible design elements wherever possible and strive to implement greater accessibility in our built environments in the future.

Where We Are

Although the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Built Environment Standard has only recently come into being, Providence Care already has many features that support accessibility at our building locations.

Our newest facility, Providence Care Hospital, is among the most advanced having been designed and built according to the Ontario Building Code, meeting the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment) and following Senior Friendly Hospital standards.

- Designated accessible parking close to the entrances of our facilities; Providence Care Hospital offers reduced mobility parking for individuals with mobility issues but do not require accessible parking.
• Ramp access at main points of entry to our facilities, for wheelchair access.

• Accessible washrooms available in our facilities.

• Automated doors and door openers at the main entry points to our facilities; Providence Care Hospital has door openers within the facility as well.

• Compliance with the Ontario Building Code, its existing standards for accessibility and meeting the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment) when we are making improvements in our facilities or building new.

• Signage that promotes visual and informational clarity, a clear sense of way finding and which uses a mix of upper and lower case text for ease of reading.

• A way-finding strategy that keeps destination names to fewer than 20 characters and uses universal symbols and pictograms wherever possible.

• Staff and volunteers assist those in need to navigate within our facilities.

• Ramps and elevators within our buildings provide accessibility within our multi-level buildings. Elevator controls were redesigned and installed in 2019 to better meet the accessibility needs of our patients and clients.

• Attention was paid to the outdoor environment including ease of access to entrances, nearby parking, slope and change of grades details, texture of terrain, use of safe surface materials and barrier-free walkways and paths of travel with resting places.

• Exterior public eating areas provides ample space for individuals using mobility aids.

• Newly built customer service desks (Welcome Desk, Registration and on-unit care desks) at Providence Care Hospital are built to be welcoming to individuals using mobility aids, providing a forward approach and clearance.

• Waiting areas at Providence Care Hospital have various accessible seating options, and appropriate space and clearance for individuals using mobility devices. The seating is not fixed to afford flexibility.
• Providence Care Hospital utilizes automated controls and/or accessible placement of manual controls, lighting and furnishings which account for the needs of those with disabilities.

• Providence Care actively monitors the state of its facilities and ground, including accessible elements through Facilities Maintenance preventative and emergency maintenance plans in place, Joint Health & Safety Committees, and Quality & Safety Leadership Walkabouts. Outside of preventative maintenance schedules, Providence Care also encourages staff, clients, patients, residents and visitors to identify items requiring attention through its SafetE-Net & wE-Care reporting system.

• In the event that there is a temporary disruption of goods or services, Providence Care coordinates appropriate notice to the public with information about the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration of the disruption, and information about any available alternative goods or services.

**Important References**

**Appendix – Temporary Disruptions** outlines how Providence Care notifies the public of temporary disruptions in goods and services.

**Appendix – Policies: CLIN-PP-41 ‘Psychiatric Patient Advocate – Complaints, CARE-RC-11 Compliments and Complaints (Providence Manor), and ADM-QRM-4 Patient Relations – Responding to Compliments and Complaints** outline how Providence Care receives and addresses feedback received about goods and services provided. Information about providing feedback is posted on the Providence Care website.

**What’s Next**

• Providence Manor, our long-term care facility is undergoing a redevelopment due to its aging building structure. Many of the same core principles used for construction of Providence Care Hospital will be considered, and its construction will adhere to the Ontario Building Code and meeting the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment).

• Planning for Kingston’s first Hospice Residence in Providence Village is underway. The vision includes 10 suites with a home like setting for people to receive Compassion and care using an approach that addresses the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of people who are nearing end of life. It will enhance services and provide a seamless transition in care and support.
• As leases on existing satellite community locations expire, we will consider alternative locations that provide improved accessibility as warranted.

Customer Service and Transportation

What We Believe

At Providence Care, we deliver a variety of healthcare services to our clients, patients and residents, including those with disabilities. Through education, resources and ongoing strategic and process development, we strive to be a health care provider free of barriers for those we serve.

Where We Are

Providence Care has designed and implemented a number of tools and resources that allow staff and volunteers to provide services to persons with disabilities. Below are a number of ways we work to eliminate barriers for individuals with disabilities:

• A formal complaint process for staff and our clients, patients and residents to identify accessibility barriers that require action by the organization.

• Departmental guidelines that outline standards to follow for removing barriers to access and services.

• Staff and volunteer education on accessibility standards and diversity at Providence Care, emphasizing respect and consideration for persons with disabilities.

• Online resources for staff that covers the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, required standards and tips for effectively communicating with persons with a disability and supporting individuals with assistive devices, service animals or support persons.

• Procurement practices that incorporate accessibility criteria and features for applicable goods, services and facilities.

• An information page that is available to both internal and external contacts promoting accessibility at Providence Care.
• Accessible transportation services are available directly through Providence Care or through municipal services to our clients, patients and residents participating in community activities.

• Wheelchairs are available at the main entrance of our hospital site for outpatient clients, patients and visitors.

• Service animals may accompany clients, patients, residents and visitors who require assistance; the Infection Prevention & Control department works to ensure that necessary infection control precautions are in place for service animals.

• Support persons may remain with persons with disabilities and where they may not be allowed access for reasons of privacy and confidentiality, alternative support arrangements are available.

• Clinical and public spaces allow for personal assistive devices to remain with the individual at all times.

• Staff and volunteer job-specific training on working with various assistive devices and supporting clients with disabilities based on their individual needs.

• Use of internal and external interpreter services to support individuals with such disabilities as hearing and vision impairment.

• Use of TTY services as needed.

• Sample assistive devices are available for demonstration to clients who may be acquiring a new device.

• Information about temporary service disruptions is available through the Communications department and/or through publicly posted notifications.

**Important References**

**Appendix – Hiring and Employment Practices** outlines the means by which Providence Care provides staff training on creating an accessible environment.

**Appendices – Tips for Communicating with Persons with a Disability, Interacting with Persons with a Service Animal and Interacting with Persons with a Support**
Person are training tools used in Providence Care’s new employee onboarding process, to assist staff in providing services to individuals with disabilities.

Appendix – Procurement Standards outlines how we incorporate accessibility features and criteria into our procurement practices.

Appendix: Policy ADM-ADM-8 Translation and Interpreting Services outlines interpreter and translation resources available.

Appendix – Temporary Disruptions outlines how Providence Care notifies the public of temporary disruptions in goods and services.

Appendix – Policies: CLIN-PP-41 ‘Psychiatric Patient Advocate – Complaints, CARE-RC-11 Compliments and Complaints (Providence Manor), and ADM-QRM-4 Patient Relations – Responding to Compliments and Complaints outline how Providence Care receives and addresses feedback received about goods and services provided. Information about providing feedback is posted on the Providence Care website.

Appendix – Policy CLIN-PP-109 Service/Guide Dog provides guidance for staff in supporting individuals with disabilities to have their service dog or guide dog remain with them during an inpatient stay.

What’s Next

As a health service provider, meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities is already part of our everyday business. Providence Care is committed to continuous improvement to ensure that we maintain high levels of customer service to persons with disabilities. Our future objectives include:

- Enhancing staff and volunteer training through self-directed customer service training modules to be completed before the individual starts work.

- Ensuring that first point of contact customer service access points in our new long-term care home, are fully accessible; such as having bariatric chairs in all waiting areas, having varied heights at reception counters and sliding doors at the main entrance/exit.
Information & Communication

What We Believe

Providence Care is committed to leading the way in accessible communications for persons with disabilities. We incorporate accessibility into our communication tactics, materials and processes to ensure that we can efficiently provide communication and information to individuals with disabilities.

Our goal is to provide effective and efficient access to information for all of our clients, patients, residents, staff, volunteers and visitors to our sites.

Where We Are

Providence Care follows accessibility design principles and best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications. We strive to ensure that information is available and accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes websites, intranet sites, communications materials, telephone communications and face-to-face interactions:

- New staff and volunteer orientation includes information on communicating with disabled persons, highlighting a number of physical, cognitive and personal assistive communicative techniques.

- Communications staff is available to provide face-to-face or telephone support for accessing communication materials.

- Client feedback process is available in accessible formats and/or with communications supports upon request.

- Alternate language guidelines include how we provide access to translation services.

- Print guidelines that recommend accessible font size, type, layout, plain language and contrast.

- Public notices on our website, including emergency procedures, planning and public safety, are available in a variety of alternate formats such as large print, HTML and tagged PDF’s and/or with communication supports upon request.
• Staff have resource material to use as reference when developing and revising documents with accessible content in alternate formats.

• Video production guidelines require the transcription of all video to provide closed captioning.

• Our website and Intranet are WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant for ease of use with screen readers, option to increase text size and contrast.

**What’s Next**

We are committed to the ongoing enhancement of how we share information with others. Our future goals for improving accessibility of our communication and information include:

• Developing guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents for common desktop applications such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

• Providing training and guidance documents to staff to create, evaluate and enhance accessible PDF documents using Adobe Acrobat Professional.

• Ensuring that self-registration kiosks have accessibility features in the design.

• Enhance awareness that information is available in accessible formats and/or with communication supports upon request through notifications in prominent public locations such as the website.
Employment

What We Believe

At Providence Care, we practice non-discriminatory, inclusive and accessible employment standards to attract and retain talented employees. These employment practices enable staff with disabilities to fully participate in all facets of the organization. We are committed to fostering a workplace of inclusion, understanding and accommodation for staff with disabilities.

Where We Are

Providence Care has focused on an accessible workplace through the following initiatives:

- Managers are trained on our obligations as an employer to provide employment accommodation and on our accommodation and return to work processes that support individuals with disabilities to fully participate in the work environment.

- Staff receive training on our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities and our return to work processes.

- Individuals with disabilities participate with their managers and our Occupational Health and Safety department in the planning and development of their documented individual workplace accommodation plan.

- Internal and external applicants are advised of the ability to be accommodated in the recruitment and selection processes.

- Individualized plans are in place for staff members with a disability to ensure their safety in the event of an emergency.

- Ergonomic assessments through our in-house expertise and/or external ergonomists to ensure that the physical work spaces meet the unique needs of a staff member with a disability.

- Employees with disabilities have access to information in accessible formats and/or with communication supports upon request.
• Staff may use assistive devices, support persons and/or service animals to fully participate at work where needed.

• The performance management process takes into account the unique accessibility needs of individuals with disability to support them to fully participate in the process.

• Accessibility needs are taken into consideration to enable staff to fully participate in training activities.

**Important References**

**Appendix - Hiring and Employment Practices** illustrates how Providence Care ensures accessible hiring practices.

**What’s Next**

Providence Care intends to further enhance our employment accessibility practices. These efforts will include:

• Implementing online application process through an accessible website.

• Developing a formalized succession planning framework to support career development and advancement that takes into account the accessibility needs of staff with disabilities.
Appendices

Appendix: Providence Care AODA Action Plan
Appendix: Policy ADM-CR-6 Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities
Appendix: Policy CLIN-PP-41 ‘Psychiatric Patient Advocate – Complaints
Appendix: Policy CARE-RC-11 Compliments and Complaints (Providence Manor)
Appendix: Policy ADM-QRM-4 Patient Relations – Responding to Compliments and Complaints
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Appendix: Hiring and Employment Practices
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Appendix: Tips for Interacting with Persons with a Support Person
Appendix: Procurement Standards
Appendix: Policy ADM-ADM-8 Translation and Interpreting Services