

Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) Accessible Customer Service Policy

Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council

55 St. Clair Avenue West

Suite 806 Box 18

Toronto, Ontario M4V 2Y7

Toll-Free: 1-888-377-7746

Telephone: 416-326-1550.

Fax: 416-326-1549



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1. Introduction

The Government of Ontario supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities as set out in the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), the [Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(ODA\), 2001](#) and the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005](#). It is the goal of the Ontario Government to make Ontario barrier-free by 2025. As we move closer to that date, it is expected that government, or third parties operating on behalf of government, providing goods, services and facilities will become progressively more accessible and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07](#) (also referred to as the accessible customer service regulation or the "customer service standard"), came into force on January 1, 2008. It is the first accessibility standard created under the authority of the AODA and is a significant step toward the overarching goal of a barrier-free Ontario. The Customer Service standard applies to every designated public sector organization and to every other person or organization that provides goods or services to members of the public or other third parties and that has at least one employee in Ontario. The Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC), in its role as an arms-length agency of government, is required to be compliant with the regulation by January 1, 2010.

Accessibility standards will set requirements in a number of other key areas and will be reviewed at least every five years. New requirements may be added over time. Whenever new or revised standards are developed under the AODA, this policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure consistency. Updated information about the AODA and accessibility standards is available at: <http://www.accesson.ca/> or by calling the AODA Contact Centre at 1-866-515-2025 (TTY 416-325-3408) or 1-800-268-7095 (toll-free).

This policy has been prepared to outline what HPRAC will do to comply with the regulation and what members of the public may expect from us. This policy also supports the service vision, principles and mandatory requirements of the OPS Service Directive, which is intended to guide government or third parties on its behalf in their efforts to meet or exceed customer needs and expectations.

The policy is intended to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Whether a person's disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their need for accommodation respected whenever they interact with a government or related third party's service.

This policy is available in alternate formats upon request

2. Our mission

HPRAC is established under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) and provides independent policy advice to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on matters related to the regulation of health professionals in Ontario.

Before making recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, input is sought from a variety of sources including the public, interest groups, health professionals, health professional regulatory colleges and associations. Depending on the nature of the project, a variety of channels are used including written submissions, public hearings, focus groups and community meetings. HPRAC's process is open, accessible and accountable.

HPRAC's mandate

HPRAC provides advice to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that is independent of the Minister, the Ministry and stakeholders who have an interest in the issues. Through consultations and policy examination, HPRAC helps to protect patients and the public by ensuring that practitioners are qualified, up-to-date and meet high standards of practice and competence.

HPRAC's mandate is to advise the Minister on:

- Whether or not to regulate or de-regulate health professions.
- Suggested amendments to the RHPA and related Acts and their regulations.
- Matters concerning the quality assurance and patient relations programs of health professional colleges.
- Any matter related to the regulation of health professionals referred by the Minister.

HPRAC strives at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

3. Training for staff

HPRAC provides training on customer service to all employees who provide its services, and who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. New staff and staff who commence new duties that involve interaction with the public will undertake training as part of their orientation, if they haven't already done so.

HPRAC will provide staff with training that includes:

- A review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use the equipment or devices available on the provider's premises, or otherwise, that may assist with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Ontario Public Service (OPS) goods and services; and
- OPS policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to persons with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

4. Assistive devices

HPRAC is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to enable them to fully participate in HPRAC's processes.

HPRAC will attempt to ensure that staff knows how to manage assistive devices used by persons with disabilities either at its office or in consultation settings away from the office premises.

5. Use of service animals and support persons

Persons with disabilities may bring a service animal to the parts of our premises that are open to the public and to those places outside of HPRAC's office where consultations are being held. HPRAC will ensure that all staff, volunteers and third parties dealing with the public are trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, and how to respond to the service animal.

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be encouraged to participate in HPRAC's consultations at the parts of HPRAC's office premises that are open to the public, and in those places outside of HPRAC's office where consultations are being held.

When support persons are required (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, attendants) for HPRAC sponsored meetings, consultations or events, HPRAC will arrange to pay support persons directly for their time and reasonable travel expenses upon request, in accordance with government travel and hospitality guidelines. Information pertaining to documentation and guidelines for submitting claims on this matter is available by contacting HPRAC.

6. Communication

Communication with persons with disabilities will be undertaken in ways that take into account their disability. This means staff will enable persons with disabilities to communicate effectively for purposes of using, receiving and requesting HPRAC services.

HPRAC will train staff who communicate with members of the public on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

7. Comments and Complaints process

The ultimate goal of this policy is to meet and improve the way in which HPRAC provides service to persons with disabilities. Feedback from members of the public is encouraged to assist HPRAC in its continued effort to provide customer service in an accessible manner.

To provide feedback regarding this policy or any other matters related to accessibility, members of the public are encouraged to visit HPRAC's website for information about the process. HPRAC will to the extent possible respect privacy in these matters. Comments and suggestions will be reviewed for actions that can be taken to improve services offered by HPRAC.

Where possible, complaints and comments will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints might require more resources to resolve, or might take a longer time to review. Comments or complaints should be addressed to the Executive Coordinator of HPRAC, and can be submitted by telephone, mail, fax or email. Complete information with respect to submitting a complaint or comment is available on the HPRAC website.

In accordance with the OPS Common Service Standards, a complainant can expect an acknowledgement of a complaint within fifteen business days following its receipt. The acknowledgement will indicate how the matter will

be addressed and the expected timelines for its resolution. HPRAC will undertake any action in response to the comment or complaint within the timeframe noted in the acknowledgement. HPRAC will endeavour to make its response in an accessible format to the complainant or person providing feedback.

8. Notice of temporary disruptions

HPRAC will provide members of the public with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by persons with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption is expected to last, and a description of any alternative facilities or services available (if any).

The notice will be placed at HPRAC's office premises. Depending on the nature of the disruption, notice, in accessible formats where possible, will be provided on HPRAC's website and where applicable, on assistive communication devices.

9. Modifications to this or other policies

HPRAC is committed to ensuring that its customer service policies, practices and procedures respect and promote the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.

10. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, if the purpose of this policy is not understood, or to receive a copy of this policy, please contact:

[The Executive Coordinator](#)
[Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council](#)
55 St. Clair Avenue, W.
Suite 806, Box 18
Toronto, ON. M4V 2Y7
Tel: 416-326-1553
Fax: 416-326-1549

For general information with respect to the Government of Ontario accessibility policy, please contact:

OPS Diversity Office
375 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2J5

OPSdiversity@ontario.ca
Telephone: 416-325-2114
TTY: 416-327-1459

Download a copy of the policy:

[Ontario Public Service \(OPS\) Accessible Customer Service Policy \(PDF - 44 K\)](#)