RENFREW COUNTY AND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT POLICY AND PROCEDURES REGARDING ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PURPOSE:

This policy and procedure applies to all employees, students, volunteers and contractors who provide programs, services or facilities on behalf of Renfrew County and District Health Unit. It outlines how Renfrew County and District Health Unit intends to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards.

STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (the Health Unit) protects and promotes the health and well-being of all residents through leadership, partnership, accountability and service excellence. The Health Unit is committed to working towards optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District. In keeping with its Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals, the Health Unit is committed to the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity as described in the AODA and to meeting the needs of people with disabilities through the implementation of this policy. To this end the Health Unit will provide:

- equal access and participation for people with disabilities
- programs and services that are accessible to all
- processes to ensure that all employees, students, volunteers and contractors who provide programs, services or facilities on behalf of the Health Unit are provided with appropriate training on the AODA and its Standards
- information and communications to persons with disabilities in a timely manner in accordance with the AODA and its Standards
- employment practices that accommodate job applicants and employees with disabilities

The Health Unit will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its practices are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity as expressed in the AODA by:

- valuing all clients as deserving of effective and full service (dignity)
- taking into account how people with disabilities can effectively access and use Health Unit programs and services and show respect for these methods (dignity)
- allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing programs and services as long as this does not present a safety risk (independence)

- providing *integrated* services that allow people with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same places and in the same or similar ways as other clients, and providing *alternative* measures where necessary to meet the needs of people with disabilities (integration)
- taking into account individual needs when providing programs and services to ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities equal to those given others to obtain, use and benefit from Health Unit programs and services and do not experience barriers to access or participation (equal opportunity)
- upon request, communicating with people who have disabilities in ways that take into account their disability

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT:

The Health Unit has developed accessibility policies, procedures and a multi-year accessibility plan to facilitate full implementation of its responsibilities under the AODA and its Standards, in support of the Ontario goal of making the province accessible by 2025. The components of the Policy and Procedures Regarding Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities are outlined below:

Notice of Disruption in Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to on-site services or facilities for clients with disabilities, the Health Unit will collaborate with landlords as necessary to notify clients promptly. A clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Assistive Devices

The Health Unit will ensure that employees, students, volunteers and contractors who provide programs, services or facilities on behalf of the Health Unit are trained and familiar with any assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our programs or services.

Service Animals

The Health Unit welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Feedback Process

Clients who wish to provide feedback on the way Renfrew County and District Health Unit provides programs and services to people with disabilities can contact us in the following ways:

Email: contact@rcdhu.com
Telephone: 613-732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097
In writing: Renfrew County and District Health Unit, 141 Lake Street, Pembroke ON K8A 5L8.

Clients can expect to hear back within five business days.

Upon request, the Health Unit will facilitate feedback through accessible formats or communication supports. Forms and surveys that gather feedback will include a statement such as the following: "Please ask us if you need this form in an accessible format, or if you would like help with completing it."

Training

- The Heath Unit will provide training on Accessible Customer Services, the relevant Integrated Accessibility Standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.
- All employees, students, volunteers and contractors who provide programs, services or facilities on behalf of the Health Unit will be trained as soon as practicable after starting at the Health Unit, as part of their orientation. Training will also be provided when changes are made to the organization's accessibility policies, practices and procedures.

Information and Communication

The Health Unit is committed to making information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities:

- Upon request, the Health Unit will provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities that takes into account a person's accessibility needs, in a timely manner.
- The Health Unit will notify the public on its website and in the reception areas of its premises about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- The Health Unit will make internet websites and web content conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 initially at Level A for new web sites and web content, and increasing to level AA by January 1, 2021.
- Upon request, the Health Unit will provide emergency procedures, plans and public safety information that is accessible to people with disabilities.

Employment

- The Health Unit is committed to fair employment practices and shall collaborate with persons with disabilities in developing accommodation solutions together. Accommodation requires collaboration between the organization and the person seeking accommodation.
- The Health Unit will ensure accommodation of persons with disabilities during employment recruitment and assessment processes and when persons with disabilities are hired.
- The Health Unit will consult with applicants who have disabilities and arrange for an interview format and process that meets their specific needs. As well, job postings will include a statement that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities.
- The Health Unit will include   the Health Unit's Policy and Procedures Regarding Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in the orientation material for new employees.
- The Health Unit will ensure individual accommodation plans and return to work plans are developed for persons with disabilities.
- Upon request, the Health Unit will provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information.
- The Health Unit will ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are considered as part of career development, performance management and redeployment processes.
- The Health Unit will communicate its Policy and Procedures Regarding Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities through email, meetings or other methods as appropriate.
- Upon request, the Health Unit will consult with an employee with a disability to understand his/her needs and provide information needed to perform the employee's job and information that is generally available to employees in an accessible format or with communication supports.

PROCEDURES:

General

The Health Unit will make all accessibility policies, procedures and plans publicly available by posting them on the Health Unit's website. Upon request, all policies, procedures and plans will be provided in accessible formats and/or with communication supports.

The accessibility plan will be updated at least once every five years and the accessibility policies and procedures will be updated every two years at a minimum.

Notice of Disruption

Notices about disruption in service will be prepared by the most relevant Program Manager and will be posted at Health Unit offices and on the Health Unit's website where appropriate.

If the disruption is anticipated, the Health Unit will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

Training

Program Managers and Directors will ensure that all employees, students, volunteers and contractors who provide programs, services or facilities on behalf of the Health Unit receive training, and will ensure a record of training (dates of training, names of persons trained) is maintained.

Accessibility training will include the following:

- An overview of the AODA 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and the relevant sections of Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards
- The Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities
- The Health Unit's plan related to the Customer Service Standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- 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 the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing programs or services to people with disabilities (Includes wheelchairs and telecommunication devices if available)
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Health Unit's programs and services
- Requirements for each of the Integrated Accessibility Standards that apply to the Health Unit
- The Health Unit's accessibility policies, procedures and multi-year accessibility plan

Information and Communication

Upon receiving a request for accessible formats or communication supports, the Health Unit will:

- Consult with the person making the request to understand how we can meet his/her needs, as soon as possible after the request is made.
- Provide the information in an accessible format or provide communication support as soon as possible.
- If the information or communication is unconvertible (it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communication, or the technology to convert it is not

readily available), the Health Unit will provide an explanation of why the information or communication is unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information.

Appendix A *provides further information and examples of ways to make information and communication accessible.*

Employment

- Human resources will inform applicants through the recruitment and selection process that the Health Unit will provide accommodations upon request for persons with disabilities.
- Human resources will ensure processes are in place to determine the accommodation needs of employees and that the responsible manager of the employee is informed. Managers will then include this information as part of the performance management process.
- Human resources will ensure the development of accommodation plans and return to work plans for employees who have been absent with a disability.

Updated September 13, 2017

APPENDIX A: Guide to Providing Accessible Information and Communication

There are two main ways to make information and communications accessible:

1) Provide the information in an accessible format (often an alternative to standard print).

2) Provide communication supports to enable the person to understand and use information in the existing format.

When requested to provide information in an accessible format or communication support, always ask about the person's needs and what format or support would best meet their needs.

Examples of providing accessible formats

For people with vision loss:
- Print documents in a larger font (ask the person how big it needs to be).
- Increase the contrast between text and background colours.
- Create electronic documents using authoring techniques described by the Accessible Digital Office Documents Project. These files can be converted to Braille, and read out loud by a Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) or a screen reader.

For people with hearing loss:
- Provide a script or add captions to videos.

For people with intellectual or developmental disabilities:
- In print materials, use clear language and simple sentence structure (everyone else appreciates this too).

Examples of using communication supports

For people with vision loss:
- Read documents out loud and answer any questions.

For people with hearing loss:
- Use written notes when communicating in person.
- Use Bell's Relay Service to communicate by telephone (See instructions in the binder: "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Customer Service Standard Employee Resources". See the section titled "How to Use TTY and Telephone Relay".)

For people with intellectual or developmental disabilities:
- Take the time to explain, demonstrate and check for understanding.