



BOARD OF HEALTH POLICY

APPROVALS	DATE APPROVED	INITIALS
BOH:	Res. No.: 56-2026	
SLT:		
MCC:		
IF APPLICABLE		
DIRECTOR		
HR:		
PPL:		

SECTION: BOARD OF HEALTH **POLICY NO.:** BH-02-12

SUBJECT: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

APPROVED BY: Board of Health **POLICY DATE:** May 2026

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This policy states the commitment of the Thunder Bay District Board of Health to ensuring that the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) strives for excellence in customer service and in providing programs and services to all members of the public, including people with varying abilities and disabilities.
- 1.2. This policy also provides direction to ensure the organization is compliant with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* including the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* and all regulations pursuant to the Act, noting that this policy primarily addresses the Customer Service and Information and Communications Standards within the regulation.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. TBDHU is committed to providing programs and services that meet the needs of everyone in our communities, regardless of ability. TBDHU will strive to deliver on this commitment in a manner that respects the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for all.
- 2.2. Whenever possible, TBDHU will ensure that persons of all abilities benefit from the same services. This means services will be provided in the same place, at the same time, and in a similar way. When there are exceptions, an alternative approach may be required to create equal opportunity.
- 2.3. TBDHU is committed to excellence in serving all members of the public and in working effectively with partners and community members, including people with disabilities and varying abilities.
- 2.4. TBDHU recognizes that abilities and disabilities are diverse and will use a client-centred approach with every client interaction to identify any issues and provide accommodation or supports as appropriate and feasible.

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- 2.5. TBDHU is committed to meeting its responsibilities to provide programs and services to people with varying abilities, including those who may require support persons, assistive devices or service animals, and those who may require alternative communication methods.
- 2.6. TBDHU will make all reasonable efforts to provide timely notice of any temporary disruptions to accessible facilities or services.
- 2.7. TBDHU will make all reasonable efforts to provide a barrier-free and inclusive environment for its clients and customers, recognizing that this will also benefit employees, students, job applicants, suppliers, visitors, partners, community members and others who enter TBDHU premises or who access programs and services.
- 2.8. TBDHU will take measures where appropriate to ensure compliance by third parties with this policy when contracting services. In addition, TBDHU will ensure alignment with this policy and the applicable legislation when engaging in activities to update or renovate the built physical environment of TBDHU premises.
- 2.9. TBDHU is committed to maintaining compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the AODA, all regulations pursuant to the Act including maintaining compliance if legislation is changed.
- 2.10. TBDHU will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its various communication products and channels, including the website and social media, incorporate accessibility considerations.
- 2.11. TBDHU will provide appropriate orientation and ongoing training to all employees, students, volunteers and others as appropriate, to ensure a sufficient level of awareness, knowledge, and skills to meet the requirements of this policy and applicable legislation. More in-depth training and supports will be provided as appropriate and required, particularly for client-serving program staff, communications staff, and those developing or reviewing policies.
- 2.12. TBDHU will maintain mechanisms to gather client feedback on TBDHU programs, services, events, and activities, including information specific to accessibility. TBDHU is committed to addressing identified issues or deficiencies in a timely fashion.
- 2.13. The Medical Officer of Health / Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that appropriate organizational and program policies and practices, where applicable, are in place to fulfil the commitments in this policy and the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the AODA, 2005.
- 2.14. Nothing in this policy is intended to replace or affect existing legal obligations under the Human Rights Code and other applicable legislation with respect to people with disabilities.
- 2.15. This policy applies to all persons employed by TBDHU including employees, students, volunteers, Board members, and in some cases, agency partners who deal with the public, or third parties acting on behalf of TBDHU.

3. APPLICABLE PROCEDURES

There are no procedures with this policy.

4. DEFINITIONS:

While this policy refers to “people with varying abilities and disabilities”, the definition of “persons with disabilities” in the AODA, 2005 is provided here for additional context.

4.1 The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* defines **disability** as:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, 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;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which the benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”).

5. REFERENCES

- 5.1. [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- 5.2. [Integrated Accessibility Standards. Ontario Regulation 191/11](#)
- 5.3. [Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c H. 19.](#)

6. APPENDICES/LINKS AND ATTACHMENTS

6.1. There are no attachments with this policy.