

This Policy has been established pursuant to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

Our dental laboratory will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Respecting the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- Integrating the provision of dental services to persons with disabilities, unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable use of or benefit from dental services available in our dental laboratory
- Giving persons with disabilities an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the dental services available in our dental laboratory

Definitions

Dignity: Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and receive respect from other people.

Independence: When a person with a disability is allowed to do things on his or her own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration: Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar ways as others, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity: Service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods or services equal to those given to others.

Client Service: Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

1. Our mission

Our laboratory is dedicated to the provision of exemplary dental services to the clients we serve.

2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, our dental laboratory strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and to benefit from the services, in the same place, if possible, and in a similar way as other clients of our laboratory. If necessary, we will work with persons with disabilities to assist them in identifying alternative means to access dental services.

3. Providing service to people with disabilities

We are committed to excellence in serving all clients, including people with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

3.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train those staff members who communicate with clients and others on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.2 Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to clients and their families. We will train staff to communicate over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. If we are advised that telephone communication is not suitable to a particular individual, we will aim to provide the needed accommodation.

3.3 Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our dental services. We will ensure that our workers are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while they are accessing our services.

3.4 Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our clients. For this reason, invoices will be provided in alternate formats upon request. We will answer any questions about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email, in accordance with our office's Privacy Policy.

4. Use of service animals and support persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law, in which case, steps will be taken to ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to access dental services. We will also ensure that all staff and anyone else dealing with clients, their families and others, are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal. An animal is a service animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, or if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse, in accordance with Section 4 of the AODA.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter our dental laboratory with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises. Support persons will be asked to agree to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of personal information related to the provision of dental services provided to clients, in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

5. Notice of temporary disruption

If our dental laboratory relies upon particular equipment, devices, facilities or services in order to provide dental services to persons with disabilities, we will provide details in Appendix “A” of this Policy. In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the use of such equipment, devices, facilities or services, we will provide notice, which will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed at all entrances and service counters on our premises. The notice will be given in accordance with requirements under Section 5 of the AODA.

6. Training for staff

We will provide training to all employees, independent contractors, agents, volunteers and others who work with us and on our behalf, with a view to ensuring that they are familiarized with our policies, practices and procedures for providing persons with disabilities and their families with dental services. This training will be provided to existing staff – at the time this Policy is implemented; for new staff – when they commence their duties; and for all staff on an on-going basis. Training will include the following:

- the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the regulations and accessibility standards established under the Act
- 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, devices, services and/or facilities currently available on our premises or through our office, if any (and described more fully in Appendix “A” to this Policy where applicable), to help people with disabilities who obtain dental services from our laboratory
- how to locate and implement our laboratory’s policies, practices and procedures on accessibility standards
- what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing our dental services
- how to obtain additional information on assisting people with disabilities, available through Ontario’s Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Accessibility Directorate website: <http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/>.

Applicable staff will be trained on developing and updating the policies, practices and procedures that affect the way dental services are provided to people with disabilities and their families. Staff will also be trained, on an ongoing basis, when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

7. Feedback process

Our ultimate goal is to meet and surpass client expectations while serving people with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way our dental laboratory provides services to people with

disabilities can be brought directly to the attention of your RDT by any method (e.g. in person, by telephone, by email, in writing, etc.).

If you have a complaint regarding accessibility, we ask that you speak with your RDT directly. Your RDT is committed to working with you to resolve your concerns.

8. Modifications to this or other policies

We are committed to developing office policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. No changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. We will modify or remove any office policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

9. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to people with disabilities who seek dental services through our dental laboratory. If anyone has a question about this policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, your RDT.

10. Dental laboratories with at least 20 employees in Ontario

It is acknowledged that any dental laboratory with at least 20 employees in Ontario has additional obligations under the AODA in that it must:

- self-evaluate and certify their compliance with the accessibility standard for patient service by completing and filing an annual accessibility report with the Government of Ontario
- prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures, including those relating to service animals, temporary service disruptions, training and other issues, and upon request provide a copy of such documentation to any person
- prepare a document describing its training policy, a summary of the contents of the training, details of when the training is to be provided, the dates actually provided, and the number of individuals to whom it was provided
- notify persons to whom it provides dental services that documents required by regulations under the AODA are available upon request, and such notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises, on the provider's website, or by another method that is reasonable in the circumstances.

These additional obligations:

- Apply to our dental laboratory
- Do not apply to our dental laboratory

Date on which this Policy has been put into effect:

Appendix "A"

In this Appendix, we address the following:

- a. the personal assistive devices used and/or available for use in our laboratory, if any
- b. how we will serve clients who use personal assistive devices to access our dental services
- c. what, if any, assistive measures our laboratory will make available and/or offer to people with disabilities
- d. how services may be made available in another location, if it is not possible to provide service within the laboratory itself
- e. how we can learn from our clients directly how best to communicate with them and/or their designated representative, and how to accommodate their disability
- f. how it is our standard practice to describe to clients any information posted, if they are unable to read a sign
- g. what telephone services may be made available to clients who are deaf, deafened, oral deaf or hard of hearing
- h. how we will establish practices to communicate with clients who rely on lip-reading
- i. how we will make paper and pen available to communicate through note-writing
- j. how we will establish a practice to communicate in plain language, to avoid using technical language with people who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability
- k. what equipment, devices, services and/or facilities are currently available through our laboratory and on our premises to help people with disabilities communicate with us and obtain dental services from our laboratory.