

**Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health**

**Policy for  
the  
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005  
("AODA")**

**January 2011**

## ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health

#### Principles

**Dignity** – Wabano is committed to providing service in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people. Disabled people will not be forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience.

**Independence** – Wabano is committed to enhancing the disabled person's ability to function independently without unnecessary help or interference from others.

**Integration** – Wabano is committed to offer services in a way that allows the disabled person to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless alternate measures are necessary to enable the person to access those goods or services.

**Equal opportunity** – Wabano is committed to provide people with disabilities an opportunity equal to that given to others to access its goods or services.

## Accessibility Pledge

The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health welcomes and encourages people living with disabilities to use our services. Wabano will provide access to services for disabled people in a way that respects their dignity, independence and integration.

Wabano strives to provide services to all in a welcoming and supportive environment, and will consider the individual needs of people with disabilities when delivering service by:

- \*Considering individual and special needs when applying Wabano policies and rules
- \*Communicating with people in a way that meets their needs
- \*Welcoming feedback and suggestions about services in a variety of formats
- \*Welcoming accompanying support people
- \*Offering a range of assistive devices
- \*Welcoming service animals
- \*Advising, wherever possible when services are not available, for example, if a program is cancelled or if the website is not available
- \*Ensuring emergency responses address accessibility
- \*Training staff and volunteers to provide the best possible service
- \*Providing a forum for addressing concerns or challenges associated with accessing services including contact phone numbers
- \*Providing opportunities for continuous improvement and regular review of accessibility policies and procedures

# ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DRAFT POLICY

## Policy Objectives

The goal of this policy is to ensure that Wabano meets or exceeds the standards set by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA") and its regulations.

## Policy Statement

Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health welcomes and encourages people with disabilities to use its services. Wabano will provide access to services for people with disabilities in a way that respects rights to dignity, independence and integration.

This commitment is consistent with Wabano's mission to deliver services in a welcoming and supportive environment applying core Aboriginal values based on the Seven Sacred Teachings of Respect, Courage, Honesty, Love, Wisdom, Humility and Truth.

Wabano will continue to establish policies, practices and procedures which support the accessibility standards established under the AODA on customer service, information and communication, employment and the built environment.

## Scope

This policy applies to the delivery of all operations, services and programs provided by Wabano.

## Accountability

The Management Team at Wabano is accountable to clients and to the government of Ontario by meeting the standards set by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA") and its regulations. Concerns regarding the implementation of this policy may be brought to the attention of a Director or Human Resources.

## **1.0 Wabano Policies**

Wabano policies will be applied in a way that considers the needs of people with disabilities while upholding the principles of respect for dignity, independence and integration.

## **2.0 Communication**

Staff and volunteers will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes their needs into consideration.

## **3.0 Training for staff and volunteers**

Wabano will continue to train staff and volunteers to meet the needs of people with disabilities. This includes the training requirements in the AODA and its regulations.

## **4.0 Feedback process**

Wabano welcomes client feedback and makes information available to all clients on how to provide feedback. This is done at intake with every new client through the Service Agreement, which is both provided to the client in writing and explained orally. Client Rights and Responsibilities are also posted on every level of the building, which explains how clients can provide feedback. Feedback is accepted by Wabano either orally, in writing or through a support person and feedback is regularly solicited through client satisfaction surveys. Staff assistance is available to support all clients, including people with disabilities, in providing feedback.

## **5.0 Requests for Accommodation under the *Ontario Human Rights Code***

Wabano will continue to meet the standards set by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* ("Code"). Where a request for accommodation is made, Wabano will strive to provide accommodation in a way that most respects the dignity of the person. Wabano recognizes that people with disabilities may require individualized accommodation and that each person's needs are unique. Accommodation will be provided unless the Centre experiences "undue hardship" as defined in the Code.

## **Specific Directives - Customer Service**

The following directives address the requirements established by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 ("Customer Service Standard").

### **6.0 Provision of Services**

In keeping with Wabano's mission of providing free and equitable access in a welcoming and supportive environment, the Centre will:

- Provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and provides them with an equal opportunity to learn about, use or benefit from Wabano services.
- Integrate services for people with disabilities. The Centre understands that equitable access sometimes requires different treatment including separate or specialized services. However, such services will be offered in a way that respects the dignity and enhances full participation of people with disabilities.

### **7.0 Service Animals**

Wabano continues to welcome the service animals needed to assist people with disabilities.

### **8.0 Support people**

Wabano welcomes people with disabilities and accompanying support people. In most cases, the Centre does not charge for the programs and services that it offers. However, when admission fees are charged for programs or services, such fees will be waived for support people. Advance notice will be given where possible in the case of any admission fees that support people must pay.

### **9.0 Assistive Devices**

Wabano offers a broad range of assistive devices in place to meet the needs of people with disabilities, and will make reasonable efforts to permit the use of such devices. Wabano also recognizes that accessibility can be achieved and provided in different ways.

### **10.0 Notice of temporary service disruption**

Wabano will provide notice and explanation of service disruption including duration and a description of available alternatives, if any. In the event of an unplanned disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible.

### **11.0 Information and Documentation on Accessible Customer Service**

Wabano will document its policies, practices and procedures as required by the Customer Service Standard. Members of the public will be notified of the availability of this documentation which will be presented in a variety of formats.

## **Definitions**

### **Assistive Device**

Wabano defines an assistive device as a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating or lifting (examples include, walkers, magnifiers for reading, etc...).

### **Barrier**

The Centre defines a barrier as any policy, practice or procedure, or part of the built environment, that prevents a disabled person from participating fully in programs or services because of his or her disability.

### **Disability**

Wabano uses the AODA definition of disability. A disability can include: a) physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement, b) mental impairment or developmental disability, c) learning disability, d) mental disorder, and e) an injury or disability for which government benefits are received.

### **Reasonable Efforts**

The Customer Service Standard requires organizations to make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Wabano defines reasonable efforts as:

- a) providing the best possible service within the context of available resources,
- b) balancing the needs of people with disabilities with the needs of others in the community at large who may encounter barriers to access
- c) ensuring that actions taken will not negatively impact the health and safety of staff and volunteers, the community at large, or the security of Wabano property,
- d) ensuring that actions taken will not contravene existing laws or contracts.

### **Alternate formats**

Ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing are:

- audio format such as cassettes or digital audio format



- Braille used by some people who are blind or deaf-blind
- videos that may be helpful to people with certain learning disabilities
- easy-to-read, simplified summaries of materials for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

### **Service animal**

An animal - usually a dog - that is trained to help a person with a disability. Service animals help people:

- with autism or other developmental/intellectual disabilities
- with vision loss
- who are Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing
- with mental health disabilities
- with physical disabilities
- who have epilepsy or other seizure disorders.

Service animals are also called guide dogs or dog guides.

### **Support person**

A support person is someone who accompanies a disabled person in order to assist with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or to facilitate access to goods or services.