

## **Annual Status Report for Trillium Health Partner's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020 and 2021)**

Trillium Health Partners has established a multi-year accessibility plan to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and to meet requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

THP's mission of *a new kind of health care for a healthier community* is rooted in our values of compassion, excellence and courage. Achieving this requires deep commitment to delivering the best possible health outcomes and an exceptional patient experience through high quality, access and sustainability, in ways that leave no one behind. In response, THP is committed to identifying and eliminating barriers that limit inclusive, accessible and equitable care and experiences for everyone who comes to our hospitals.

This Annual Status Report describes THP's progress on accessibility improvements for both 2020 and 2021. The purpose of this report is to continuously track our organization's efforts and make the public aware of our initiatives.

This report is available online at:

<https://www.thp.ca/patientsupport/Documents/Annual-Status-Report-2020-2021.pdf>

To request an alternate format of this annual status report, please contact:

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### **General Accomplishments**

Through 2020 and 2021, Trillium Health Partners (THP) focused acutely on the need to deliver high-quality services through exceptional circumstances. We adjusted our services and practices in a number of ways as a result of the pandemic, ensuring that accessibility was considered as part of each of the changes we introduced. Many of the improvements that were introduced as a result of the pandemic have been found to be highly successful and will be sustained as we go forward to enable the ongoing accessibility of this organization.

### **Service Accomplishments**

- The Patient Relations team introduced virtual options for those hoping to connect with THP to share compliments, concerns or suggestions for improvement (in addition to maintaining in-person options), making the process more accessible to everyone wishing to provide feedback.
- THP's Patient and Family Engagement Program has continued throughout 20/21, with consultation opportunities made available through a variety of media options that make it possible for advisors to continue to participate regardless of circumstance.

- THP initiated large COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics to address the vaccination needs of thousands of individuals in our community. Accessible customer service standards were reviewed with clinic staff as part of training. Feedback from community members was reviewed regularly to rapidly refine operations, space, equipment and supports provided. Ad-hoc training for staff was provided in key customer service areas (e.g. mobility and falls prevention support, needle phobia).

## **Information and Communications Accomplishments**

### *Technologies and Tools to Support Communication*

- THP introduced a new language translation service that enables real-time access to translation in over 200 languages, including American Sign Language. This service was initially tested with patients of one department and early experience indicates an improved experience and outcomes, leading to the decision to roll out more widely as a result.
- Tablets were introduced at the bedside to enable patients to connect with loved ones throughout the pandemic. Tablets will continue to be made available for this purpose going forward to ensure ongoing accessibility of patient and family connections.
- A new Hospital Information System was introduced at THP with a number of features that support accessibility. Users are able to adjust their display including colour and font size to accommodate specific needs. A summary report provided to patients upon discharge via this system can be augmented using reporting tools to adjust font size for accessibility.
- Barrier-free COVID-19 vaccination appointment booking was enabled through a website, email address and call center (operating 12 hours per day/7 days per week) with multilingual staff. Appointment booking included the ability to submit accommodation requests and provided options to request individualized support. Examples of this included: tours of the vaccination area or consultation with a clinical professional.
- The COVID-19 Vaccination Team collaborated with local partners to co-design communications approaches to increase vaccination awareness and information. The vaccination website was designed according to AODA principles, explained features of the physical space/supports available (e.g. mobility aids) and shared information for those requiring support persons and/or animals to be present.
- Video conferencing software become more widely available and used through 2020 and 2021. The introduction of enhanced virtual care options like video conference and virtual visits made it simpler for patients with access challenges to receive care from the comfort of their homes.

- As a result of COVID-19, symptom screening became a mandatory requirement for individuals entering the hospital. A mobile application was introduced, making it simple for staff, patients and the public to access the screening tool from their own devices.
- As a result of the pandemic, new processes were rapidly introduced to enable the release of information digitally (where previously the process could only be accommodated in-person). This practice will continue going forward.
- Accessibility and compliance with AODA continues to be a requirement included in any and all contracts that THP enters into with vendors when acquiring new software solutions.

#### *Website*

- THP upgraded our public internet site to increase ease of access and navigation. This work included the addition of multi-language conversion.
- The hospital's catalogue of publicly accessible PDF files was remediated, and a workflow was established to remediate those files going forward.

### **Employment Accomplishments**

- Similar to the virtual tools made available to patients, video conferencing tools also made it possible for staff to work virtually or flexibly, which provided additional options for those with accommodation needs to remain connected with colleagues. A work-from-home toolkit was developed to provide guidance to those on working from home on approaches to independent wellbeing.
- Wellbeing and mental health supports were made accessible virtually to those working remotely, including one-on-one counseling, meditation, stretch breaks, and team wellness sessions. Mental health resources shared with staff were enhanced to include additional culturally competent and community-based supports.
- The Wellness Team worked with managers to develop plans for the wellbeing of neurodivergent staff members working on-site.

### **Transportation Accomplishments**

- In 2020, shuttle bus services between sites were temporarily suspended due to concerns with the transmission of COVID-19. Services reinstated as soon as possible to enable transport.
- Non-emergency ground ambulance services and taxi services have continued to offer transportation to individuals with mobility challenges throughout 2020 and 2021.
- In response to changes in services as a result of COVID-19, space was reconfigured to provide EMS with a designated area to offload patients. As a result, six temporary patient pick-up & drop-off spots were created at both the Mississauga Hospital and Credit Valley Hospital Sites to accommodate

individuals seeking emergency care. These changes have significantly improved experience for individuals with mobility challenges.

## **Design of Public Spaces Accomplishments**

- New community COVID-19 vaccination clinics were set-up with barrier-free physical access in mind, including an accessibility audit completed by an Occupational Therapist. Key accessibility features included private vaccination and registration areas, wheelchair accessible clinic/parking/bathrooms, access to translation services, transport wheelchairs (with or without porter to assist), and availability of Patient Support Staff Member to attend to in-the-moment accessibility/support needs as requested.
- Designated parking was established for individuals attending COVID-19 vaccination appointments. Drive-thru assessment centres accommodate a wheelchair accessible lane for individuals attending the testing centre without a vehicle.
- Approximately \$2M were spent on external asphalt & concrete improvements to improve the accessibility of physical infrastructure (e.g. resurfacing roadways, parking lots, repairing sidewalks). Line painting occurred across all sites to improve visibility at pedestrian crosswalks and other locations.
- Signs were refreshed and new signs were placed across all sites to enable wayfinding and navigation, particularly to support new services lines initiated as a result of the pandemic.
- As part of THP's Trillium HealthWorks redevelopment projects, any design for a new area or space will not only meet the current AODA standards but will allow for the flexibility to include enhancements to standards as the design evolves. These projects are also evaluating opportunities to exceed certain standards so that the new facilities will align with THP's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles, ensuring the facilities are accessible for all of our community members. Over 2020 and 2021, projects include: new/refreshed showers and washroom spaces at several sites, installation of a temporary structure to enable enhanced pandemic capacity, and work on the organization's retail strategy.

## **Next Steps**

- Technology to Support Communication:
  - Following success of the translation service pilot in one patient population, the service will be rolled out to further populations and will also be integrated with THP's health information system to better support information sharing.
  - THP is working to introduce voice recognition for in-bound calls to the organization, enabling new and more accessible methods to direct patients and the public to the right party.

- Website:
  - While the organization's external website was updated over 2020/2021, the internal staff-facing website will be updated over the coming year to provide new features that support easier navigation and accessibility.
  - On the external website, THP will be continuing to refine its process for posting new files to ensure that all materials on the website are accessible. The organization will also be developing educational materials to assist THP's network of content providers to understand and comply with AODA standards.
- Employment:
  - The organization is in the process of introducing new policies and processes for individual accommodation that will better support those with long-term accommodation needs.
- Infrastructure:
  - Facilities will be completing additional asphalt and concrete replacement to enhance the accessibility of the environment.