

## **Annual Status Report for Trillium Health Partners' Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2022 and 2023)**

Trillium Health Partners has established a new multi-year accessibility plan for 2024-2029 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 2022 and 2023. The purpose of this report is to continuously track the organization's efforts and make the public aware of the ongoing initiatives.

This report is available online at:

<https://www.thp.ca/patientsupport/Pages/Accessibility.aspx>

To request an alternate format of this annual status report, please contact: Communications and Public Affairs at 905-848-7538 or at [public.affairs@thp.ca](mailto:public.affairs@thp.ca).

### **Service Accomplishments**

- Various virtual visiting options were introduced for patient families in 2020-21 including bedside tablets. The Patient Relations team is continuing to provide these virtual options to better connect patients with their loved ones, in addition to in-person visiting.
- In 2023, THP implemented a virtual language interpretation service available for patients across all sites, which includes American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. It is a virtual software installed on bedside tablets/iPads provided to units or departments, employing real-time interpreters to help patients and families. It can also be accessed by calling 1-888-842-1768. For interpretation requests or queries across the organization, individuals can reach out via email to [interpreters@thp.ca](mailto:interpreters@thp.ca).
- THP's Patient and Family Partnership Program has continued throughout 2022/23, with consultation opportunities made available through a variety of media options that make it possible for patient partners to continue to participate regardless of circumstance.
- A pilot initiative for Patient Food Preferences was launched at THP in collaboration with a third-party vendor in 2023. The objectives are to increase

consumption of patient meals and reduce malnutrition by diversifying menu items and reducing packaging to allow easier access for patients who may have a cognitive or physical impairment.

- The first “General Persuasive Approach training” session was conducted in 2023 for ER staff to help them better support patients with neurodivergence and communicative disorders.

## **Information and Communications Accomplishments**

### *Technologies and Tools to Support Communication*

- THP rolled out the previously introduced language interpretation service in 2023 across all sites. The service enables real-time access to translation in over 200 languages, including American Sign Language. In support of equity and accessibility, posters in multiple languages were installed to communicate this information across the organization.
- THP is continuing to use Zoom as the primary platform for virtual conferences and meetings, whereas also introducing Microsoft Teams. The closed captioning feature on both platforms ensures accessibility for any individual that may need the support.
- MyChart, a personalized and secure patient-facing health portal, has been introduced in 2023. MyChart allows patients to have better access to their health information, seamless interactions between patient and provider, and improve overall patient experience. MyChart also has the ability to leverage screen readers, provide high contrast themes for the user and also, zooming in functionality.
- The AODA and IASR modules were combined to develop a wholesome mandatory learning module for all staff. THP continues to add accessibility features to the learning modules on the platform.
- In early 2023, we conducted staff education sessions on our intranet to further socialize the communications standards at THP for accessibility. In addition, we developed and circulated resources including an AODA checklist on how to create PDF documents in accessible formats.
- We have a process in place to fulfil any requests to provide our Annual Report in an accessible format upon request.
- THP’s Switchboard team implemented Care Connect Speech in January 2023. This application uses voice recognition on incoming calls to THP, to allow callers to state the department or clinic they would like to speak with, and connects them directly to that area of specialty.
- Accessibility and compliance with the AODA continue to be a requirement included in any and all contracts that THP enters into with vendors when acquiring new software solutions.
- THP conducted an organization-wide software update to Microsoft 365 in 2023. This update includes several accessibility features like dictation, read aloud, immersive reader, live subtitles in multiple languages and accessibility checker and more.

- THP's Information Services team conducted All Staff information sessions and shared organization-wide information sheets to ensure staff awareness of the accessibility features within Microsoft 365.

### *Website*

- In 2022/23, THP updated and improved the internal website to a new version backed up by new servers and infrastructure, making the website more accessible and user-friendly.
- All documents on THP's internal and external websites are made available in accessible formats upon request.
- THP's Intranet website was updated in 2023 to provide the Attending Physician Report (APR) which is a fillable and downloadable form. As this form is filled by an employee's physician as part of the disability reporting process, the availability of the form on the intranet will make the process easier and more accessible.
- THP Foundation made significant upgrades to their website in terms of accessibility and meeting AODA Standards and Regulations. For instance, we removed radial buttons from our online donor forms.

### **Employment Accomplishments**

- Supporting and promoting accessibility at the organization, THP is modifying the organization's standards to include work-from-home as a standard practice moving forward. This will allow individuals to continue to work-from-home.
- In addition, THP is providing more tools for our remote staff to be better connected, including uninterrupted access to Zoom, mobile phones and options to install new software like Microsoft Teams.
- A new Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provider was contracted by THP in 2023. In addition to all the services being provided previously, the new provider ensures better support services for employees' mental health and wellbeing and gives users access to a network of providers with diverse backgrounds.
- In February of 2022, we hired a full-time Return to Work Specialist to help support our staff with chronic medical conditions. They help provide alternative work opportunities within THP to employees returning from WSIB, sick leave, long-term medical leave. This helps accommodate a person's requirements as well as utilize their talents in the best manner.
- THP's Long Term Accommodation policies and processes were reviewed and refreshed to better support those with chronic medical conditions. One of the refreshed processes includes standardizing Return-To-Work meetings for employees returning from disability leave.
- A full-time Wellbeing Social Worker or Psychotherapist was hired to provide short-term counseling (virtually or on-site) to all THP employees requiring mental health support.
- In February of 2022, THP also made progress in terms of accessibility by expanding the People Health clinic hours of operation to a 12-hour/7-day model.

- In 2022, the People Services department conducted monthly educational sessions with various teams on topics focusing on equity and accessibility. These topics included implicit bias in recruitment, disability justice, duty to accommodate and anti-Black racism. THP's HR department will continue to hold these educational sessions in the future.
- The Sick Pay Benefits under the Short-Term Disability Plan were updated owing to the sick day bank reinstatement conditions. The program was updated to be more equitable for employees, broadening eligibility for sick day bank reinstatement to include individuals who require accommodations when they return to work.

### **Transportation Accomplishments**

- THP continues to offer shuttle services to all individuals across our sites. The shuttles operate Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm between all three sites.
- THP also has non-urgent patient transfer (NUPT) vehicles operating between all sites, to patient homes, and long-term care homes.
- All vehicles are well-equipped to accommodate mobility requests, including wheelchair access and allow service animals on board. The shuttles have screens displaying shuttle stops and schedules to help those with hearing impairments, and the drivers call out the stops for individuals that may be visually impaired.

### **Design of Public Spaces Accomplishments**

- In 2023, signs were refreshed and replaced at the Mississauga Hospital and Credit Valley Hospital sites, to support wayfinding and navigation.
- To ensure all outdoor areas remain accessible, approximately \$750,000 were spent on annual maintenance efforts at the Mississauga Hospital and Credit Valley Hospital sites in 2022-23. It included asphalt and concrete paving and resurfacing of sidewalks, parking areas, entrance ways, and bus stops.
- Renovations were conducted to renew showers and ensure accessibility needs were being met at the Mississauga Hospital J-wing in 2022-23.
- As part of THP's Trillium HealthWorks redevelopment projects, any design for a new area or space meets the current baseline OBC and AODA Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) accessibility requirement and provides flexibility for future enhancements as the design evolves.
- All doors and elevator vestibules in the parking garage were repainted at M-site and completed in compliance with AODA requirements in 2023.
- A third-party vendor was hired to re-paint all handrails and stairwells in the CVH parking garage. This included roughly 6 stairwells and handrails, stairwell doors/frames and fire hose cabinets on 8-10 floors. This was done to eliminate rust and chipped paint and improve accessibility and safety at the facilities. The work was completed in the fall of 2023.

## General Accomplishments

Through 2022 and 2023, while recovering from a global pandemic situation, Trillium Health Partners (THP) focused on continuing to deliver high-quality services. With many adjustments made to THP's services through the pandemic and during the recovery phase, it was ensured that accessibility was considered a part of the changes that were implemented. Many of the improvements that were introduced as a result of the pandemic have been found to be highly successful. They will be sustained as THP works towards enabling the ongoing accessibility of this organization.

THP's Accessibility Policy was recently updated to further align with Ministry guidelines. It was subsequently approved and publicly posted on our websites. The current policy includes an updated statement of organizational commitment, details regarding providing individualized accommodation plans for staff, a new section for Design of Public Spaces, and new updates to the Training and Education section.

- A new learning module focused on Anti-Black Racism was introduced for THP Staff in 2023. The module was made accessible by adding text-to-speech buttons for all of the provided information.
- The "Talk Listen and Connect" pilot project was launched in 2022, in which volunteers support medicine unit patients during mealtimes by opening containers, setting up the meal and socializing with the patients.
- As part of THP Foundation's annual fundraising events, the Hazel McCallion Walk was organized in 2023. The walking route was chosen with accessibility in mind, ensuring ample space to accommodate strollers, wheelchairs and other accessible equipment.
- THP Foundation ensured compliance with AODA while establishing their new brand guidelines in 2023.

## Next Steps

- Service Accomplishments
  - THP will be looking into the possibilities of making MyChart services available to patients in multiple languages.
  - Depending on the success of the Patient Food Preferences pilot program, THP will be looking to expand the program across all sites over the next year.
  - Depending on funding approvals, the General Persuasive Approach training will become an annual exercise going forward.
- Technology to Support Communication:
  - MyChart will be expanded in the next year, with several features that support accessibility like eCheck-in (complete the check-in

progress from home to save time when patients arrive at the clinic), e-visits (submit questionnaires, photos, videos and symptoms for healthcare provider), meet with a provider over video, receive notifications of provider messages and test results by email, text message or push notification.

- Extensive education around developing accessible PDF documents across the organization will continue in the next 2 years.
- THP will look into leveraging the newly introduced language interpretation software at big organization-wide events and announcements, to promote accessibility and inclusivity for all.
- Continue to conduct education sessions on accessibility features within new software.
- Website:
  - There are plans to significantly upgrade THP's external website to become more accessible and user-friendly.
  - THP Foundation is rebuilding their website with a third-party vendor to ensure they are AODA-compliant and to improve mobile functionality.
- Employment:
  - The new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) will be introduced in the fall of 2024. This system will improve staff usability and functionality by converting staff scheduling from a paper-based process to become fully electronic.
  - Staff training will be scheduled to familiarize staff with the new HRIS. This training will be made available virtually, in-person or self-guided to promote accessibility.
- Infrastructure:
  - Facilities will continue annual maintenance of outdoor spaces and pathways to ensure accessibility.
  - Facilities will be renewing signage for updated or renovated locations at all sites to improve wayfinding.
  - THP Trillium HealthWorks 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.