



The Ottawa Hospital | L'Hôpital d'Ottawa

January to December 2018

# The Ottawa Hospital Annual Report on Accessibility



The Ottawa Hospital and Affiliates:



The Ottawa Hospital | L'Hôpital d'Ottawa  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE



UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA  
HEART INSTITUTE  
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE  
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

An accessible place for persons with disabilities to work, volunteer and experience compassionate care.

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## Executive Summary

Every day in Ontario, almost 60 children are born with a disability that may be diagnosed at birth or later in life. These disabilities will directly affect their level of freedom, independence or quality of life. It is for this reason that Ontario has chosen the journey of ensuring greater accessibility, not just for these children but for everyone who lives with a disability. As a community, we have come to acknowledge the need to respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. With the help of technology, improved processes, new Human Resources (HR) practices and a better understanding of how to accommodate the unique needs of persons with disabilities, more and more of these individuals are now facing a better future.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA)* came into effect in 2005, with a goal of achieving an accessible Ontario by 2025. In 2018, we begin our second multi-year plan to meet and exceed the standards set out in this AODA regulation.

**We are listening!** The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) continues to encourage open dialogue and open-minded attitudes that remove barriers, enabling individuals with disabilities to feel safe and welcome within our environment. TOH has put in place several tools to ensure that our journey to greater accessibility includes your voice and responds to your needs. Examples include:

- The work of The Ottawa Hospital Community Engagement Group (CEG) which includes people with disabilities and members of advocacy groups playing an important role in the planning of a new Civic Campus.
- The Patient Relations Department is available to receive all accessibility related concerns and is prompt and effective in responding to them.
- You can approach anyone - staff, physician or volunteer to either share your appreciation or concerns and they will kindly refer you to the appropriate department.

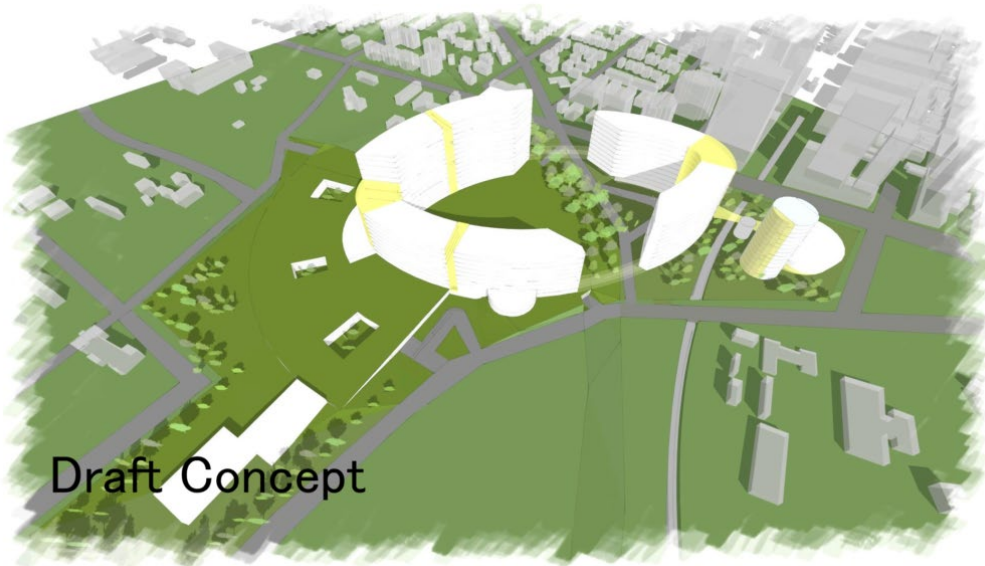
The Ottawa Hospital is proud to be a leader on this journey. This report provides a glimpse of the work underway at TOH. We are committed to a culture of accessibility and it continues to grow. We welcome your support and comments as we strive to make TOH the most accessible healthcare institution in the Champlain region. Working together with the communities we serve will help us provide each patient with the world-class care, exceptional service and compassion that we would want for our loved ones.

Renée Légaré  
Executive Vice President, & Chief Human Resources Officer

## Community Engagement Group

As The Ottawa Hospital is now on a journey to build a state-of-the-art new campus, hearing from the community is an important element in the planning process. From an accessibility lens, this is especially important when it comes to ensuring we are eliminating barriers to access at the design level. It is for this reason, the hospital invited members of the community to join the Community Engagement Group (CEG). This group will work in collaboration with our internal Communication team in order to make sure that the new campus' design meets the needs for many generations to come.

The Chair of the Ottawa Disability Coalition ([www.ottawadisability.com](http://www.ottawadisability.com)) is one of the CEG members, ensuring a voice representing people with disabilities on this important consultative group. Accessibility is at the forefront of committee discussions when looking at the suggested exterior landscape and accessibility features inside the campus.



## Quality Improvement Project for Patient Education Documents

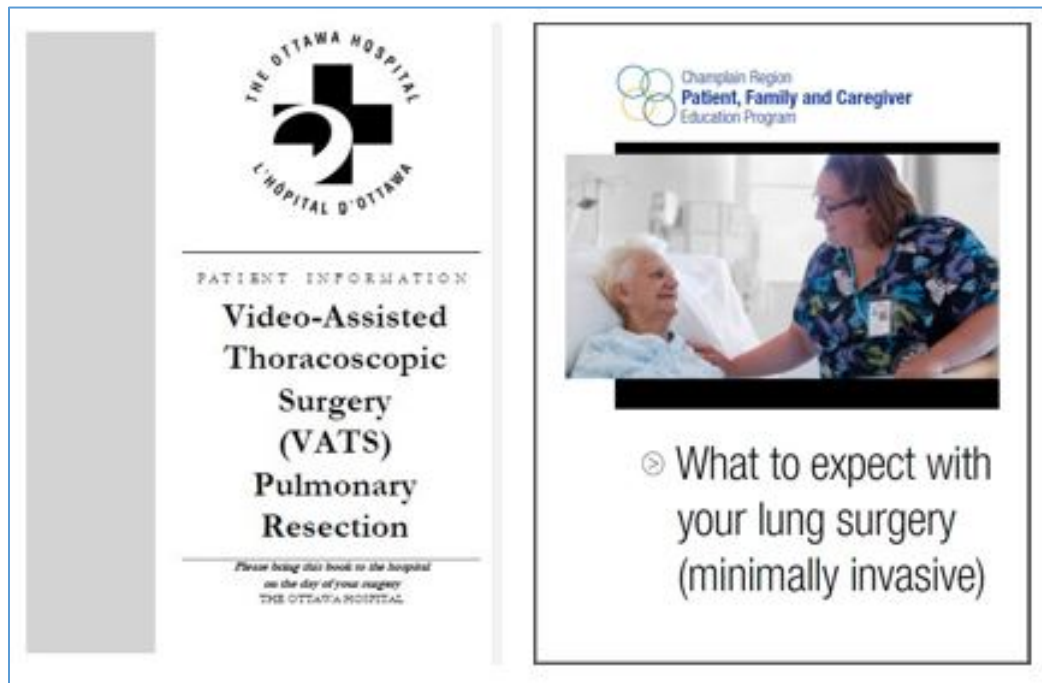
Evidence has clearly shown that patients who understand their medical conditions, what to expect when they come to the hospital, how to take their medications, and what symptoms to watch for etc. tend to recover better after discharge and experience fewer patient safety incidents. The best patient education documents meet the following health literacy best practices:

- Clear language: no medical jargon, text at Grade 6 to 8 level
- Clear design: letter size is easy to read, images add value, alternate-text used
- Adult learning: best formats are used (video, text, podcast, app, website)

- Accessibility: meets Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements
- Patient feedback: patients review and offer feedback

The Ottawa Hospital’s Communications and Education departments are co-leading a quality improvement project on patient, family and caregiver education documentation. The project is part of the hospital’s Quality Improvement Plan, filed with the Ontario government.

The project goals are to set up a sustainable process for creating or revising patient, family and caregiver education documents so they meet the health literacy best practices identified above and then test the process by running 30 documents through it. Accessibility checklists and tips are being developed for content creators, graphic designers and webmasters to ensure all documents meet AODA requirements. The project began in April 2018 and will be complete by June 2019.



Before

After

### Interpretation Services at TOH

We know, and we have heard from patients with diverse linguistic backgrounds as well as health care teams that communication is key for better health outcomes. It is important that patients and their health care providers are able to successfully communicate back and forth and this is accomplished with the help of a professionally trained interpreter. These interpreters become an important part of the patient’s health care team.

Between December 2017 and December 2018, 9,707 requests for face-to-face interpretation and 782 requests for over-the-phone interpretation services were made by hospital staff for their patients. With such a large volume of needs, TOH is able to provide a better patient experience by making them part of their own health care by eliminating the language barrier.

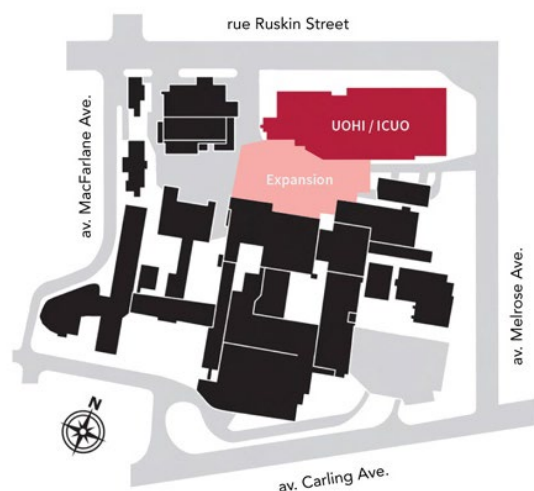
A year has gone by since TOH signed a new contract for the delivery of interpretation services for patients who speak a language other than English or French. With a new vendor now in place, an orientation session was provided to 65 interpreters. Also, as we now offer new ways to provide interpretation services, staff received training on how to use 3-way call and the Mobile Interpreter in order to provide immediate interpretation.

### The University of Ottawa Heart Institute's Expansion

The University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI) officially opened the Critical Care Tower in April 2018. The facility continues to provide the type of care UOHI is known for, at a greater capacity and in a more accessible environment. The new tower comes with great efficiencies and will support the advanced and rapidly changing technologies required to provide better care. As many of their patients are often older and have more complex medical issues, UOHI has made a huge step to meet their needs.

The new Heart Institute expansion includes:

- More than 145,000 sq. ft. of new space
- Five operating rooms, including one hybrid operating room, and one shelled-in operating room for future use
- Nine catheterization and electrophysiology labs
- An additional surgical critical care unit for 27 beds



Within the existing building, the sub-level will be completely renovated to house a centralized and expanded diagnostic imaging centre. The main lobby will be expanded and redesigned to improve visitor access, including people with disabilities.

## Review of the AODA 2018

As mandated by the AODA 2005, the provincial government initiated the steps to conduct a thorough review of the implementation and the impact of the AODA 2005 in the province of Ontario. In 2018, the Honorable David Onley accepted this challenge and put a team in place to collect feedback from different sectors and different regions of the province. One of the areas of focus was the health care sector. As the province is presently developing new health care standards, this review was timely.

Both the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and the Ontario Health Care Network of Accessibility Professionals (OHCNAP) assisted in this review. Some of the issues identified by the over 40 participants, from both hospitals and long-term care homes, included lack of access to specific training, accessible services and facilities, to name a few. Concerns were expressed related to the lack of funding to make necessary renovations to increase access for persons with disabilities.

The final report will be released early in the new year.



## Creating Job Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

In June 2018, TOH became a member of the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN). As a new EARN member with a focus on creating a diverse and inclusive organization, The Ottawa Hospital will continue to increase its ability to attract and retain persons with disabilities. As an organization, we recognize the benefit of increasing the population of persons with disabilities in our workforce. The Ottawa Hospital attended the EARN Annual Conference where we had the privilege of listening to guest speakers speak of their successes and challenges of gaining employment, as well as learning to identify possible barriers that may currently exist in our workplace.

The Ottawa Hospital participates in monthly job match calls with fellow employers and service providers. As an employer, these calls allow us the opportunity to share current job openings and make potential matches with candidates through the various service providers. Through this partnership, it is our intent to continue working with EARN to further increase our capacity to work with and include persons with disabilities within our workforce.

## Training at The Ottawa Hospital

With the arrival of new volunteers, staff and people moving up into management levels, Customer Service training and targeted training are delivered on an ongoing basis. Also, the TOH Accessibility office provides fee for service training to external clients. This past year, we provided accessibility awareness training to 135 2<sup>nd</sup> year medical students from the University of Ottawa.

In 2018, 2,350 staff and volunteers were trained covering key topics such as how to help someone with disabilities, the use of proper words and background information on both the AODA 2005 and the Ontario Human Right Code (OHRC). Another key component of the training is 'A Moment of Reflection'.

A Moment of Reflection invites participants to reflect on their own perceptions, fears and stereotypes of people with disabilities. Trainees are brought on a journey where they are exposed to pictures depicting people with different types of disabilities and are invited to reflect on the image as well as the message shared with them at that time. By the end of this 'Moment', people develop more empathy towards people with different types of disabilities, including those with visible and non-visible disabilities.

*"That was an important part of my training. Moment of Reflection helps you empathize with others again. I've learned new things about myself that will make me a better volunteer"* (TOH Volunteer)

## Summary

As we continue our journey to improving accessible healthcare by 2025, we would like to acknowledge our staff and volunteers who make a huge contribution towards that end. Amongst them, there are many champions who are leaders for accessible changes. Also, to members of our surrounding community who take the time to send us a few words to either flag an issue or for words of appreciation, thank you! We are working for you and with you!

The Ottawa Hospital is an accessible place to work, to volunteer and to experience compassionate care.

Our Accessibility & Interpretation Services team at The Ottawa Hospital:



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