

2025-2030

Geraldton District Hospital Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



Geraldton District Hospital Accessibility Plan (2025–2030)

Prepared in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Approved by: Senior Leadership Team

Review Cycle: Reviewed annually, updated every five years

Content

1. Statement of Commitment
2. Introduction
3. Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers
4. Strategies and Actions
5. Appendix A: Accessibility Plan – Initiatives – Status Report

A copy of this plan is available upon request
Contact: Savana Marino
Chief of Clinical Services
807-854-1862

Statement of Commitment

Geraldton District Hospital is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We aim to treat all individuals with dignity and respect, providing accessible services, employment, and communication across all operations. We comply with the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and are dedicated to preventing and removing barriers to accessibility.

Darryl Galusha, CEO

Introduction

Geraldton District Hospital is a 23-bed acute care facility serving Geraldton and the surrounding communities, including nearby First Nations. We provide a broad range of healthcare services including 24/7 emergency care, diagnostic imaging, laboratory, rehabilitation, and telemedicine, with a strong commitment to patient-centered, equitable care.

This Accessibility Plan outlines our dedication to complying with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). It details the strategies and actions we have implemented—and will continue to pursue—to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

Through ongoing staff training, accessible procurement, enhanced communication strategies, and inclusive employment practices, Geraldton District Hospital is committed to fostering an accessible environment for patients, visitors, and employees alike.

Our plan reaffirms our role in supporting the provincial goal of creating an accessible Ontario and reflects our dedication to continuous improvement, transparency, and community engagement.

Past Accessibility Achievements

Geraldton District Hospital takes a proactive and systematic approach to identifying barriers that may limit accessibility for people with disabilities. This approach includes:

- **Facility Audits:** Regular physical inspections of hospital buildings, public spaces, and patient care areas to detect architectural and environmental barriers, such as inaccessible entrances, signage, or washrooms.
- **Service Reviews:** Ongoing evaluation of hospital programs, services, and communication methods to uncover procedural or informational barriers that may affect access or quality of care.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Actively seeking feedback from patients, visitors, staff, and community members, including people with disabilities and advocacy groups, to identify challenges experienced firsthand.
- **Data Analysis:** Reviewing incident reports, accommodation requests, and feedback data to detect recurring accessibility issues or unmet needs.
- **Policy and Procedure Assessment:** Examining hospital policies and operational procedures to ensure they do not inadvertently create barriers and align with accessibility standards.

Identified barriers are documented and prioritized based on their impact and feasibility of resolution. This information informs the hospital's multi-year accessibility plan and guides targeted improvements to ensure equitable access for all.

As part of our ongoing accessibility efforts, Geraldton District Hospital has successfully implemented the following improvements from our previous 2022-2025 plan:

- **Built Environment & Facilities**
 - Braille Signage: Installed Braille on outpatient service signs (Imaging, Lab, Rehab, and new Emergency Department) to support individuals who are blind or visually impaired.
 - Administration Area Accessibility: Added automatic accessibility buttons to Administration door, addressing previous difficulties for individuals with mobility impairments.
 - Raised Toilets: Purchased and installed commodes where required due to the lack of raised toilets.
 - Grab Handles: Added and adjusted grab bars in ultrasound, to showers and bathrooms.
 - Door Handles: Replaced knob-style handles with lever-type handles in key public access areas.
 - Over-bed Lights: Installed longer grab cords in Acute Care to improve accessibility for patients.
- **Communication Supports**
 - Introduced whiteboards in patient rooms and erasable markers to support non-verbal communication with patients.
 - Added visual aids such as picture-based pain scales and Activities of Daily Living (ADL) charts for individuals with hearing or language barriers.
- **Barrier-Free Care Delivery**
 - Tele-Rehabilitation: Provided barrier-free rehab services through the St. Joseph's Care Group Outreach Rehabilitation Services, improving access to care in remote areas.

Strategies and Actions

Objectives for 2025–2030

- Continuously identify and remove accessibility barriers.
- Align hospital policies with accessibility principles.
- Promote feedback and involvement from people with disabilities.
- Make the Accessibility Plan and reports publicly available in accessible formats.

Accessible Customer Service

Goals & Actions:

- Maintain and review the Accessibility - Customer Service Policy annually.
- Train all employees, volunteers and contractors on accessible customer service standards.
- Ensure assistive devices, service animals and support persons are accommodated.
- Maintain and promote accessible feedback mechanisms, with alternate formats available on request.

Information and Communications

Goals & Actions:

- Provide hospital information in accessible formats upon request at no extra cost.
- Ensure emergency/public safety information is accessible.
- Promote and maintain accessible feedback processes.
- Comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA for all hospital websites and content.

Employment Standards

Goals & Actions:

- Notify applicants and employees about accommodation availability during recruitment.
- Provide accessible onboarding, job-related information, and individualized accommodation plans.
- Implement a formal return-to-work process.
- Include accessibility needs in performance management and career development.

Training

Goals & Actions:

- Deliver training on AODA, IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code to all employees, volunteers, and contractors.
- Incorporate accessibility training into onboarding.
- Maintain training records and update training with policy or legislative changes.

Design of Public Spaces

Goals & Actions:

- Follow the Design of Public Spaces Standards in new construction and redevelopment.
- Maintain accessible reception areas, waiting areas, and paths of travel.
- Implement preventative and emergency maintenance plans for accessible features.

Procurement

Goals & Actions:

- Include accessibility criteria in all procurement activities, as per Section 5 of the IASR.
- Assess accessibility features where possible:
 - Colour contrast and voice activation for digital tools.
 - Equipment height and specialized controls.
 - Vendor-provided accessibility training.
 - Barrier-free paths and physical supports.

Monitoring and Reporting

Goals & Actions:

- Review and update this plan every five years.
- Publish an annual status report on accessibility initiatives and post it on the hospital website.
- Ensure all accessibility documents are available in accessible formats upon request.

Contact and Feedback

Geraldton District Hospital welcomes the perspectives and active participation of people with disabilities and community members. This involvement is a key part of our commitment to meaningful and inclusive accessibility planning.

We welcome and encourage feedback on our accessibility practices.

Phone: 807-854-1862

Mail: Geraldton District Hospital, 500 Hogarth Ave W, Geraldton, On, P0T 1M0

Website: www.geraldontdh.com