 <p>POLICY</p> <p>WRH Universal (WRU)</p>	Document Title: Support Person Policy		Policy Number: ADM-67
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	Author: Kevin Marshall, Director Corporate Services	Authorized By: Mark Fathers , CFO& VP Corporate Services David Musyj, CEO	Effective Date: 06/01/2017 Next Review Date: 06/01/2019 Origination Date: 01/01/2010

Support Person Policy

POLICY

Windsor Regional Hospital is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service for its customers. Health care and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence to all patients, clients, residents and visitors. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated wherever possible. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the healthcare services provided by and on behalf of the organization.

PURPOSE

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. Personal care needs may include, but are not limited to, physically transferring an individual from one location to another or assisting an individual with eating or using the washroom. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure.

Some people with disabilities rely on support persons for certain services or assistance, such as using the washroom or a person with speech impairment may use a support person to facilitate communication. A support person may be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member or friend of the person with a disability. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 all public sector organizations including Windsor Regional Hospital must meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer service for WRH, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contracted staff of Windsor Regional Hospital.


DEFINITIONS

Accessible means:

- a) Patient care and other related services is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, or entered; obtainable.

Disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limited the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog, or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- d) A mental disorder
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

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PROCESS

The requirements of the standard only apply to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access. Support persons therefore may be denied access into places or areas where the public does not have access. This would include areas such as, but not limited to the operating room and intensive care units.

Customer Service Standard – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

4. (4) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

Windsor Regional Hospital must allow a person with a disability to be accompanied by his or her support person while in those areas of the premises that are open to the public or other third parties.

In some cases a support person may have to agree to rules or requirements that are specific to the kinds of services provided. Where confidentiality is important because of the kinds of information discussed, you may require the support person to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Customer Service Standard – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

4. (5) The provider of goods or services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

Most providers will not encounter situations where they would require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person. However, in certain situations it may be necessary. This would only occur where, after consultation with the person with the disability, requiring a support person is the only means available to allow the person to be on the premises and, at the same time, fulfill the provider's obligations to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or of others on the premises.

(i) Accepting personal risk

People with disabilities are free to accept a reasonable risk of injury to themselves just as other people do. Different individuals will have a different tolerance for risk. Risk should be weighed against any benefit for the person with a disability

(ii) What is a health and safety risk that would require a support person?


It is not enough that the support person might help to protect health and safety; a support person must be **necessary** or essential to protect health and safety before you can require one – the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means.

Consider whether you should require the attendance of a support person in the following situations:

1. When there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or others (the mere possibility of risk is insufficient);
2. That risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
3. That risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
4. The assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the duration of the risk, the nature and severity of the potential harm, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur, and the imminence of the potential harm; and
5. The assessment of the risk is based on the individual's actual characteristics, not merely on generalizations, misperceptions, ignorance or fears about a disability.

Any considerations on protecting health or safety should be based on specific factors and not on assumptions. Just because someone has a disability doesn't mean they're not capable of meeting health or safety requirements.

If there are any issues that are not easily/readily solved please contact the Office of the Patient Representative at Extension 52317.

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REFERENCES

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*
- *Health Protection and Promotion Act*
- *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001*