



Winnipeg Regional Health Authority    Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg

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WINNIPEG REGIONAL  
HEALTH AUTHORITY

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**ACCESSIBILITY**

**PLAN**

**2022-2024**

**FEEDBACK:**

If you have any questions or comments related to this Accessibility Plan, on how we can further improve accessibility, and /or would like to request an alternate format, please contact:

Client Relations at 204-926-7825

[ClientRelations@wrha.mb.ca](mailto:ClientRelations@wrha.mb.ca)

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## PREAMBLE

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Under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), all public sector organizations are required to develop and publish a plan to identify, present and remove barriers to accessibility. The plan will cover accessibility issues under each standard as it comes into effect, eventually covering all five standards (Customer Service, Employment, Information and Communications, Transportation and the Build Environment).

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The WRHA is pleased to update its plan consistent with the AMA May 1, 2022 deadline. The plan will be updated every second year.

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# **WRHA ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

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# 1.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE WINNIPEG REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

## 1.1 PROFILE OF THE WINNIPEG REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

The WRHA serves residents of Winnipeg, Churchill and East and West St. Paul, representing more than 700,000 people. We also provide health-care support and specialty referral services to nearly 500,000 Manitobans who live beyond these boundaries, as well as residents of northwestern Ontario and Nunavut, who require WRHA expertise and services.

## 1.2 OVERVIEW OF WRHA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The WRHA coordinates and delivers health services and promotes well-being in the Winnipeg and Churchill areas.

We provide services through its six hospitals, five health centres, numerous long-term care facilities and a wide variety of community health services including community clinics, public health and home care services, to name a few.

The WRHA’s role is defined largely under the Regional Health Authorities Act. The administration and coordination of health care services relies on a dedicated team of health care professionals and support staff to:

- Directly manage or contract with others to provide a wide range of health care services.
- Collaborate with community and other government partners to protect and enhance the health and well-being of the community.

## 1.3 OUR STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

As the largest health service delivery organization in Manitoba, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority is committed to providing high quality, accessible programs and services.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) seeks to identify, remove and prevent systemic barriers in key areas of daily living. Beginning in 2016 and every two years going forward, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority updates its Accessibility Plan, which is used as a guide to ensure that the organization has a clear strategy towards accessibility for all.

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's Accessibility Planning Committee includes representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities, business, municipalities, and other stakeholders. The Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Region complies with the AMA by identifying and facilitating the removal of barriers to equal access among persons with disabilities, including patients, their families, visitors, employees, physicians and volunteers.

Much like health care organizations across Canada and the rest of the world, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has continuously worked hard every day to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on our communities. While the pandemic has brought a lot of unexpected changes, our commitment to our vision for Healthy People, Vibrant Communities, and Equitable Care for All remains the same.

Improving accessibility and inclusion throughout the organization for people with disabilities is fundamental and ensures everyone receives the care they need. Together, we can help every person achieve their full health potential.

## 2.0 ACCESSIBILITY ACHIEVEMENTS

### 2.1 CUSTOMER SERVICE

On November 1, 2015 the first Accessibility Standard for Customer Service came into effect and our organization has continued to review and implement our Accessibility Plan based upon this standard:

- The WRHA's Accessible Customer Service Training is required to be completed by all staff and volunteers. To date the education has been delivered to several thousand staff and efforts are underway to provide regular automated reporting to all managers tracking their employee's completion of the training and overall organizational compliance.
- Through the pandemic the organization has capitalized on the expanded use of technological supports such as Microsoft Teams to conduct case conferences with clients and their family members. This technology has allowed the organization to not only sustain service during the pandemic but reduce barriers and improve access.
- Representatives from the WRHA have joined the Provincial Disruption of Racism Steering Committee, coordinated by Shared Health. The Steering Committee exists to support the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and strategies that disrupt racism in Manitoba's health system. The Steering Committee

will engage those most impacted by racism and involve those with power to make change.

## 2.2 ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT

The second Accessibility Standard for Employment was enacted on May 1, 2019 and came into effect on May 1, 2022. In support, the WRHA has built on a number of ongoing efforts:

- All WRHA job advertisements and offers of employment contain language advising applicants and new employees of the organizations ability to accommodate them throughout the selection process and on the job should they require and/or encounter barriers in their employment.
- To ensure the safety of employees with disabilities all employees are invited to confidentially notify the organization should they have a permanent, temporary, visible or invisible disability necessitating assistance during an emergency. Where such need exists, the organization works with that employee to create an individualized **Emergency Workplace Response Plan** to meet their needs in the event of an emergency situation. This accessibility standard and the organizations commitment to Accessible Employment has been incorporated into all orientation packages for new employees as well as our Accessibility Webpage where staff will find information and resources on Accessible Employment and Workplace Emergencies.
- WRHA Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health (OESH) has a well-established Accommodation and Return to Work Program for staff that is based on the duty to accommodate, which is defined by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba's "Obligation to Re-employ". The WRHA offers modified work duties or hours for both short and long-term accommodations based on medical documentation related to a staff member's abilities.
- OESH also performs ergonomic assessments of workstations and may recommend the purchase of specialized equipment such as chairs, footrests or specialty products such as split keyboards. Further detailed evaluation and guidance for proper body mechanics and workplace accommodation is provided by Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Specialists where staff encounter unique challenges due to functional impairments.
- The WRHA's 'Duty to Accommodate' workshop has now been expanded to encompass the organizations commitment to Accessible Employment. The

workshop is now entitled ‘Duty to Accommodate and Accessibility’ which all new managers must complete. This additional course content expands the workshop’s focus, teaching new managers about accessible employment and our organization’s obligations to reduce and eliminate barriers to make employment accessible for all.

## 2.3 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Although this accessibility standard has not yet been formally enacted, the WRHA has taken steps to prepare and improve accessible information and communication within the organization:

- Accessibility policies related to Access for Persons with Service Animals, Support Persons for People with Disabilities and Accessible Customer Service are in place and the organization is currently building on Accessible Employment efforts already completed to establishing our Accessible Employment Policy.
- The WRHA’s Accessibility Hub on our organization’s website has continued to grow over the years and currently contains resources and supports around Communication, Customer Service, Technology, Physical/Mobility, Training, Workplace Emergencies and more. These resources greatly increase the transfer of knowledge within the organization to support Accessibility.
- Formed in September 2015 our Accessibility Planning Committee has continued to guide, support and monitor WRHA’s progress implementing AMA requirements. Over these years the committee has identified and developed partnerships with community organizations to find and develop tools, resources and strategies to reduce barriers. The committee has also successfully incorporated a membership that includes those living with accessibility challenges ensuring that their voices are represented.
- In 2021 French Language Services successfully developed a regional protocol to ensure all facilities, programs and initiatives consistently respect, gather and document the client’s language choice at each point of entry into the system, and travels with them through their health care journey. To further address language barriers, all principles of Active Offer in both Official Languages continue to be reinforced and audited throughout designated bilingual or Francophone facilities, programs, services and agencies of the Region. To this end, Active Offer signs and bilingual signage is encouraged throughout the Region. The WRHA is also re-examining the use of alternative communication media when interacting with people who require it.

- Our WRHA Language Access Interpreter Services have grown to provide robust support for safe, accessible, equitable client-centered care both inside and outside our organization. Services are provided at no cost to publicly funded health services such as hospitals, community health services, CancerCare MB and fee-for-service physicians working in the Winnipeg Health Region. Services are accessed on a cost-recovery basis by all other regional health authorities in Manitoba and across the continuum of government service sectors including social services, justice, education and enterprise/trade. These professional interpreter services are available face-to-face and remotely (video conference, conference call), 24/7/365.
- WRHA operates a 24/7 central dispatch phone number so that health care providers can have one point of access to place interpreter requests for all language constituencies (Indigenous languages; Official languages; Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Community; Immigrant/Refugee Community)
- WRHA Language Access team leaders are also available to facilitate educational sessions for health care teams and students on the topic of language barriers, evidence supporting the engagement of trained interpreters, international best practices related to interpretation and tips for working effectively with interpreters.
- To support accessibility for limited/non-English speaking people during the COVID-19 pandemic, immediate, on-demand spoken-language interpretation was made available over-the-phone in over 200 languages to the COVID-19 provincial vaccination super-sites and the COVID-19 provincial vaccination appointment booking phone line. Vaccination appointment booking was also coordinated with ECCOE Interpreting Agency for the provision of ASL/English interpretation.

### 3.0 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Accessibility Requirement	Outcomes
<b>General Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, publish and review WRHA’s multi-year accessibility plan every 2 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Accessibility Plan is up to date with current practices and technologies.</li> <li>• Review and monitor actions to ensure compliance as new standards are enacted.</li> </ul>

<b>Customer Service</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue monitoring completion of 'Accessibility for Manitobans – Customer Service' training module in LMS as requirement for all staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase employee knowledge about the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) and our obligation to provide services and supports that are accessible and compliant with the Act, focusing on the provision of accessible customer service.</li> <li>Foster overall employee awareness and support for accessibility and WRHA's accessibility plan.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing involvement by WRHA representatives on the Provincial Disruption of Racism Steering Committee, coordinated by Shared Health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue focus on cultural safety to address bias, racism and discrimination.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the organizations first 'Accessible Employment Policy.'</li> <li>Continue ongoing review and incorporation of Accessibility Language into WRHA's employee handbook and related employment policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide clear direction and requirements for the organization around Accessible Employment, namely Recruitment, Selection, Reasonable Accommodation, Individual Accommodation, Return to Work, Performance Management and Accessibility Training.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase management capacity around awareness, support and compliance with Accessible Employment Standard and teach them how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make employment opportunities accessible to people with disabilities;</li> <li>○ Interact and communication with applicants or employees who face barriers, use assistance devices or who are assisted by a support person or service animal; and</li> <li>○ Access and comply with the organizations accessible employment policies and practices.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Learning Module for New Managers on Accessible Employment and incorporate into orientation requirements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued application of WRHA’s Employee Accommodation and Return to Work program as administered by our Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health (OESH) department.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure ongoing opportunities for staff to request reasonable accommodation based on medical documentation.</li> <li>• Continued support for ill or injured staff to return to work in a timely manner as able through the modification of duties, hours, etc.</li> <li>• Availability of ergonomic assessments and recommendation of specialized equipment where applicable to reduce employment barriers.</li> </ul>
<b>Information and Communication</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility Planning Committee to support program and site accessibility committees to implement accessibility policies and strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and promote ongoing efforts to improve accessibility in all worksites.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop formal mechanism for feedback on accessibility issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a clear avenue for patients, residents, clients, staff and the public to communicate and receive feedback when encountering barriers to accessibility.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WRHA Communication and Public Affairs will continue working towards ensuring the WRHA website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA.</li> <li>• Continued development and promotion of the WRHAs Accessibility webpage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating better web content accessibility for members of the public and internal staff.</li> <li>• Increase awareness and transfer of knowledge within the organization around accessibility and the availability of tools and supports.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Accessibility Planning Committee and WRHA French Language Services will continue communication and education on expectation for WRHA staff to include an Active Offer in all public facing areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure regular and permanent Active Offer of health and social services in both official languages (French/English) with integrity, compassion, dignity, respect, equity, accountability and excellence in a linguistically and culturally competent way that ensures the quality of services and patient safety.</li> </ul>

## 4.0 FEEDBACK

The WRHA has previously completed a number of surveys in 2016 and 2018 which continue to inform our accessibility efforts. At present the organization is working towards a more formalized feedback mechanism to hear from patients, residents, clients, staff and the public. In the interim the WRHA encourages feedback about its Accessibility Plan as well as any matters related to accessibility. Feedback may be submitted in writing, through mail, email or by telephone to:

### **Accessibility Planning Committee**

Attention: Jordan Forbes  
 Victoria General Hospital  
 2340 Pembina Hwy  
 Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2E8  
 Email: [jforbes@vgh.mb.ca](mailto:jforbes@vgh.mb.ca)  
 Phone: 204-477-3198

For further information regarding Accessibility within the WRHA please visit <https://wrha.mb.ca/accessibility/>.

Our Accessibility Planning Committee will receive and review any feedback or concerns regarding accessibility. Acknowledgment of receipt will be provided within 10 business days following the date feedback or concern(s) are received.