

Accessibility Plan 2023-2026



SOUTHLAKE
REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

Executive Summary

Southlake is dedicated to upholding the rights of individuals of all ages with disabilities by ensuring equitable access to health services, programs, and employment opportunities. Southlake recognizes that the term “disability” encompasses a broad spectrum of physical or mental conditions that can limit a person's movement, senses, or activities in various situations. These conditions may not always be visible and can be present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. Recognizing that removing barriers to daily living is not only a voluntary measure but a fundamental human and constitutional right, Southlake is committed to fostering equality for all people including those with disabilities. This commitment is rooted in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Building on past achievements, Southlake is actively engaged in the ongoing effort to eliminate existing barriers and prevent the emergence of new ones. The accessibility plan outlined herein serves as a roadmap, guiding both staff and leaders in the transformative journey toward making Southlake a more accessible and inclusive organization. Aligned with the Government of Ontario's overarching goal of achieving accessibility throughout the province by 2025, Southlake's commitment reflects a shared vision for a barrier-free and inclusive future.

About Southlake

Our team of nearly 6,000 staff, physicians, volunteers, students, and Patient and Family Advisors are committed to creating an environment where the best experiences happen. We deliver a wide range of healthcare services to the communities of the northern York Region and southern Simcoe County. Our advanced regional programs include Cancer Care and Cardiac Care and serve a broader population across the northern GTA and into Simcoe-Muskoka.

Despite ongoing challenges, Southlake has made tremendous progress towards achieving our goals as outlined in our Strategic plan. As a recognition of our commitment to quality and patient safety, we received the highest distinction of Exemplary Standing from Accreditation Canada in 2020. In 2023, Southlake was named in the Top 10 hospitals in Ontario and Top 25 hospitals in Canada by Newsweek.

Our Purpose

Building healthy communities through outstanding care, innovative partnerships, and amazing people.

Our Values

- Always with compassion** - We treat everyone like friends and family.
- Power of many** - We cultivate partnerships within and beyond our walls for positive change.
- Serve with purpose** - We are passionate about making a difference in the lives of others.
- Every voice matters** - We value all perspectives, listen respectfully, and take action.
- Courage to think differently** - We embrace creativity, diversity, and innovation in everything we do.

Our Strategic Goals

- Forge a new path to meet the changing needs of our growing communities.
- Champion a culture of exemplary care and deliver clinical excellence.
- Create an environment where the best experiences happen.
- Own our role to improve the system.

Our Commitment

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), with the goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025. The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce standards for accessibility for Ontario employers, related to ensuring that goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings are accessible and inclusive.

The AODA delineates specific requirements and regulations within various Standards, including:

1. Customer services: The provision of service to the public and training of employees in accessibility.
2. Information and communication: Communication to the public of information through uses of print, electronic devices, telephone or in person to ensure accessibility of information for all.
3. Employment: Ensuring equal opportunities for hiring and retaining employees and providing all required measures to ensure equitable employment experiences.
4. Design of public spaces: Accessibility as provided to the physical environment.

Southlake is committed to enhancing accessibility and fostering inclusion by dismantling barriers for individuals with both visible and non-visible disabilities. Our pledge is rooted in the principles of treating all individuals with respect and recognizing the inherent dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are dedicated to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to access, use, and benefit from the goods and services provided by Southlake. Southlake aims not only to meet legal obligations set out by AODA but to exceed them by creating an environment where accessibility is embedded in our culture. We recognize that diversity and inclusion are integral to the strength of our community, and we will continue to evolve our practices to ensure everyone, regardless of ability, feels welcome, respected, and able to fully participate in the Southlake experience.

Southlake’s Multiyear Accessibility Plan

Our Multi-year Accessibility Plan (2023-2026) aligns with the broader goal of creating a more accessible and inclusive organization. It has been developed with the purpose of:

- Complying with Ontario's accessibility laws
- Supporting Southlake in meeting our accessibility policy commitments
- Providing a roadmap for our leaders and staff to continue to transform Southlake into a more accessible and inclusive organization
- Specifying the measures Southlake will take to remove and prevent barriers

By integrating these purposes into the Multi-year Accessibility Plan, Southlake demonstrates a holistic commitment to accessibility that encompasses legal compliance, policy implementation, and broader organizational transformation. The plan serves as a dynamic tool to actively drive positive change toward a more inclusive future.

Development of Plan and Barrier Identification Methodologies

| Methodology | Description | Status |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Facility Audit | Southlake retained the Abilities Centre’s Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery (LEAD) consultants, to conduct an accessibility audit of our facilities. In collaboration with community members and staff with lived experience, current and future barriers were identified and recommendations for improvement were provided. | Complete |
| Review Feedback from patients, visitors and staff | The department of Patient Relations regularly receives feedback from patients and families regarding accessibility issues. Patient Experience then is able to direct the concerns to the most appropriate department, i.e. Facilities, IT, DEI, Patient feedback is obtained by random surveys being sent out to a selection of patients following discharge to assess their satisfaction with all of our services. | Ongoing throughout the year |
| Environmental Scan | An evaluation conducted to assess the accessibility and quality of the Facility or an area, often carried out during the renovation of a specific room or department. Alternatively, done in conjunction with Facilities, Occupational Health & Safety and other key stakeholders to maintain or enhance accessibility standards in the area in the area. | Ongoing throughout the year |
| Policies and Procedures Review | The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department conducts regular reviews of a policies and procedures to promote inclusion and remove barriers. | Ongoing throughout the year |

Accessibility Accomplishments

This describes the barriers previously identified and completed by Southlake.

| Type of Barrier | Description | Action |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Design of Public Spaces | Signage | The development and implementation of larger-sized signs with clear and easy-to read print. Signs were specifically designed to ensure patients can easily view them from a normal distance. |
| Design of Public Spaces | Accessible Washrooms | Increased the number of washrooms that are wheelchair accessible. Automatic door operators were added to the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nuclear Medicine hallway• Nuclear Medicine public bathroom.• Access to Morgue area Motors and control boards throughout facility have been replaced and maintained as required. |
| Information and communication | Accessible formats | Upon request accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities are provided or arranged. |
| Information and communication | Accessible Website | Several features have been incorporated into this website to make it easier for everyone to use. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Users can increase and decrease the size of the text to suit their needs.- Colour scheme was chosen to maximize contrast between text and background colours and be readable by those who experience colour blindness.- All links are underlined to distinguish links from content text.- Visual elements include alternate names and descriptions.- Wherever possible navigation items have been placed in a consistent location on each page. |
| Information and communication | Televisions | Televisions in public/common areas and patient rooms display closed captioning. |
| Information and communication | Parking payment machines | Parking payment machines located at the East main entrance and at P2 and P3 are designed at a regulated height to best service people utilizing wheelchairs. |

| Type of Barrier | Description | Action |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Employee Standards | Employment Posting | Employees and members of the public are notified of the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in our recruitment processes. |
| N/A | Diversity Equity and Inclusion Office | The newly established DEI office will actively work towards fostering an inclusive environment where accessibility is at the forefront, ensuring everyone who works and visits have equal opportunities and accommodations. |

Accessibility Work Plan 2023-2026

This proposed high-level work plan uses the AODA standards as a framework to respond to organizational or legislative requirements.

| Standard | Initiatives | Timeline |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| Customer Service | Revise and update the People First Training Resource The People First Training Resource was designed as a toolkit with best practices for our staff, physicians, students, and volunteers. The goal of this initiative is to review the toolkit and update it to ensure accuracy and relevancy. This toolkit will focus on communicating, caring for, and working with people who have disabilities. | 2023-2024 |
| Customer Service | Toolkit for Deaf, Deafened, and Hard of Hearing In partnership with the Canadian Hearing Society a toolkit and resources were developed to help improve communication and enhance patient safety and satisfaction in 2015. The goal of this initiative is to engage in a quality review and update the toolkit as needed in partnership with our patients, families, and community partners. | 2023-2024 |
| Customer Service | Accessible Customer Service Policies Southlake has various accessible customer service policies that emphasize respect and dignity for individuals with disabilities. As part of the policy management process, all policies will undergo a review and consultation process in 2025. | 2025 |

| Standard | Initiatives | Timeline |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Employment | Accessible Onboarding Evaluate the current onboarding process and ensure it is accessible to all new employees, including those with disabilities. Provide necessary materials in accessible formats and offer training on accessibility policies and procedures. | 2024-2025 |
| Employment | Emergency Evacuation Planning Develop and communicate accessible emergency evacuation plans. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that employees with disabilities are included in emergency preparedness training and drills. | 2023-2024 |
| Employment | Disability-Inclusive Training for Hiring Managers Provide additional and targeted training for hiring managers to increase awareness of diverse abilities and promote inclusive hiring practices. This training will focus on avoiding biases and stereotypes related to disabilities during the recruitment process. | 2024-2025 |
| Information and communication | Accessible Electronic Documents Develop guidelines and training for staff to create accessible electronic documents, including PDFs and Word documents. Ensure documents are tagged properly for screen readers and use clear and readable fonts. | 2026 |
| Information and communication | Accessible Communication Systems Examine communication systems used within the hospital, such as email and messaging platforms, to ensure platforms are accessible to both staff and patients. Train staff on accessible communication practices, and provide alternative methods for individuals with disabilities. | 2025-2026 |
| Information and communication | Elevators Review accessibility features in elevators such as braille and tactile indicators, and adjust the sound level of audible information regarding the floors and other relevant details to ensure individuals who are visually impaired can travel more confidently and independently. | 2025-2026 |

Glossary

The AODA adopts the broad definition for disability that is set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Disability: any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting 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 impediment, 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, or 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.

Barrier: is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Attitudinal barriers may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities.

Informational and communication barriers arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive or understand information that is available to others.

Systemic barriers in policies, practices and procedures result in people with disabilities to being treated differently than others or sometimes excluded altogether.

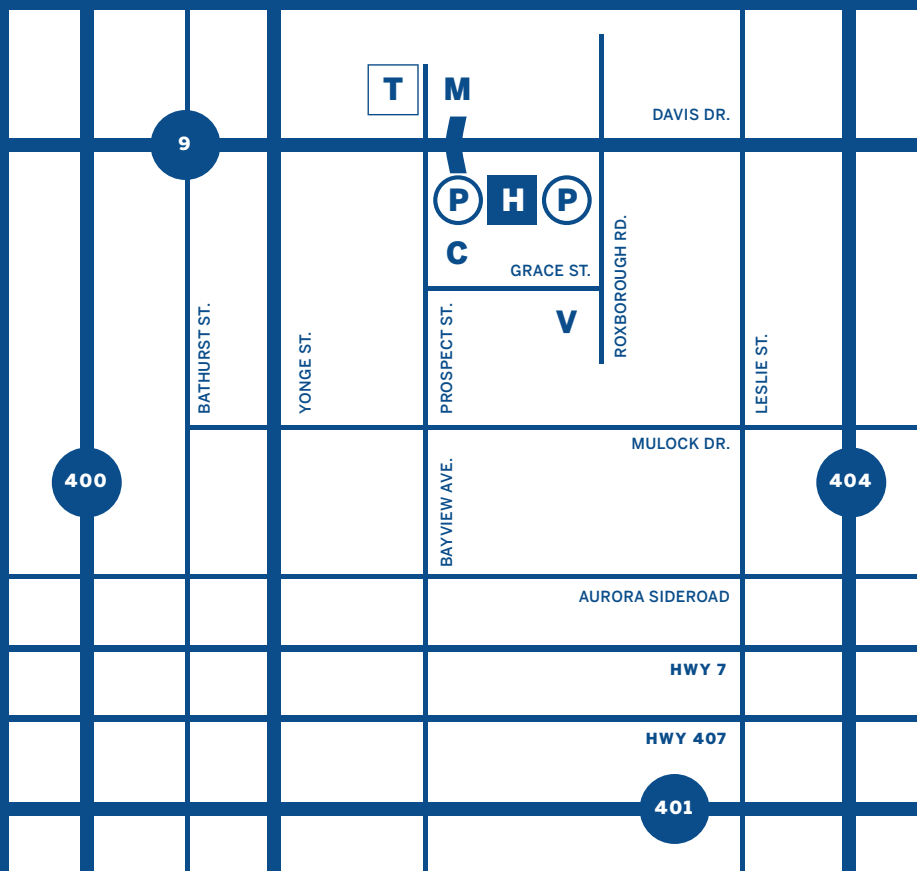
Physical and architectural barriers occurs in the environment and prevent access for people with disabilities.

Technological barriers occur when technology or the way it is used does not meet the needs of people with disabilities

Questions/Comments

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HOW TO FIND US



V Southlake Village,
640 Grace Street

M Medical Arts Building,
581 Davis Drive
Southlake Foundation,
581 Davis Drive

H Southlake Regional
Health Centre

 Bridge over Davis Drive – accessible from P3 of the
Parking Garage and Level 3 of the Medical Arts Building.

C Stronach Regional
Cancer Centre

T The Tannery Mall,
465 Davis Drive

P Parking

Southlake Regional Health Centre Facility Operations

Tel: 905-895-4521
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