



Holland Bloorview
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Accessibility Status Report

2024 - 2025

Purpose

The 2024-2025 annual Accessibility Status report is Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital's commitment to the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) and Holland Bloorview's [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2026](#).

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Holland Bloorview must meet specific requirements of the AODA. There are general compliance requirements which must be met every year. This includes ensuring there is accessible information and communication, transportation, employment, public spaces, customer service, as well as supporting policies, healthcare access, emergency procedures and training.

For us at Holland Bloorview, accessibility means considering every person and community's unique needs to access and participate, and to ensure that a place, process or thing is designed to be fully available and usable to all. It demands continuous critical attention and community engagement. We prioritize not only the clients we serve, but also our employees, volunteers and students so that we can strive to model being a top employer.

Background

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Anti-Racism office (IDEAA) supports AODA compliance reporting as outlined by the Vice President, People and Culture. IDEAA is located within the Experience, Transformation and Social Accountability portfolio. This strategic placement creates a broader context for considering and implementing accessibility requirements and ensures that there a lens to consider the intersectionality of ableism and racism.

Holland Bloorview seeks to move towards achieving its vision of full inclusion and will do so in a proactive manner through improved and meaningful accessibility of its programs, services, practices and infrastructure.

Accomplishments in Accessibility 2024-2025

Holland Bloorview has accomplished many milestones in 2024-2025 to create a more accessible and inclusive culture and environment. In many cases, the end product was the result of months of collaboration with internal programs, community stakeholders and centred in client and family partnership, as well as that of staff with lived experience.

AODA compliance through policy development

Holland Bloorview continues to build and refresh its key disability related policies in a timely manner and in full compliance with Ontario and federal legislation.

Of note is the *Emergency Response Planning for Employees with Disabilities policy* which outlines our responsibility to take every possible measure to ensure the safe evacuation of staff during an emergency. This policy delineates the importance of individualized assessments and emergency response plans to address barriers to their safe evacuation. There is the expectation that staff involved with assisting employees with disabilities during an emergency do so in a safe manner, ensuring the environment, equipment and tools used are safe and in good working condition.

- **NEW:** Emergency Response Planning for Employees with Disabilities (2025)
- [Accessibility Policy](#) now enhanced with a Privacy, Confidentiality and Access Agreement between Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and external support staff who may be hired by Holland Bloorview staff.
- Modified Work Program (reviewed 2025)
- Sickness and Disability Policy (reviewed 2025)

Building infrastructure and environmental upgrades

Cafeteria and food services renovations

Early February 2025, the cafeteria area underwent floor repairs to create greater visual contrast, floor traction and better microwave access to improve safety and accessibility of the area. Additionally, a fully accessible and sensor activated Elkay ezH2O water bottle refill station was installed in the vending machine area.

LED lighting project

In February 2025, our facilities management started the process of replacing all our current fixtures with LED lighting throughout the building. In addition to being environmentally sustainable, LED lights offer benefits like adjustable brightness and color temperature, reduced glare, and directional lighting, which can improve contrast, clarity and comfort for those with visual and sensory impairments.

Door replacement project

As of June 2025, we finalized the installation of ten new automatic door openers throughout the hospital, making more spaces more accessible for staff with mobility challenges and promoting safety and independence.

Note: The door improvement initiative started in 2022 with the Youth Advisory Council (YAC), a group of current and former clients who use their lived experience to advocate for improvements to the hospital space and programs. YAC members partnered with the building services team to identify an initial 10 doors on levels 0, 1, 2, and 5 that were then upgraded to increase accessibility to spaces such as the Activities of Daily Living (ADL) Kitchen, Participation and Inclusion offices, and Family Accommodations.

Parking Experience Enhancement

Recent Parking enhancements to improve accessibility including the addition of 2 more side loading parking spots; posting no overnight parking signs for accessible parking spots; and 5 new accessible parking spots.

Landfill Diversion/Waste Bin Project: Waste Bin Accessibility Pilot

The pilot focuses on improving waste bin accessibility on non-clinical floors. As of August 2025, members of the Disability Employee Resource Group provided input to ensure inclusive design. Roll-out included small-scale pilots to tailor solutions to specific hospital areas and user needs as well as feedback loops to refine accessibility features before broader dissemination. Considerations include:

- Bin placement: Ensuring bins are centrally located to reduce travel burden for staff and clients.
- Physical access: Addressing challenges for wheelchair users, such as difficulty reaching middle bins in triplicate setups and the need for front-loading designs.
- Visual and cognitive accessibility: Suggestions included tactile surfaces, braille signage, and simplified, resonant imagery for individuals with visual or intellectual disabilities.

Accessible digital donor wall

Our accessible digital donor wall, finalized in fall 2025 is considered to be the first of its kind in Canada. It is located on the first floor in the main reception area. A diverse group of subject matter experts including staff, family leaders, clients and disability advocates formed the advisory group. Accessibility considerations include:

- height placement
- readability with font size being no smaller than 32 point
- brightness and color contrast
- speed of slide rotation being held for a minimum of 20 seconds to support visual processing
- Audio accommodation will be available through the Holland Bloorview website
- A QR code provided to access donor list on our website
- Instructions to use donor wall in braille.

Customer Service

Accessible Business Cards

Business cards are a key tool for networking, outreach and representing Holland Bloorview. Our business cards are designed to be flexible for all staff across the organization while maintaining a consistent, sustainable look. In September 2025, we updated Holland Bloorview's business card design to improve readability, accessibility, and alignment with our evolving needs. The refreshed cards feature a clean, accessible layout with clear black type, ensuring all information is easy to read and meets accessibility standards. This refresh was shaped by feedback from a wide selection of staff across the organization.

Inclusive workplaces and employee wellbeing

Disability Employee Resource Group (January 2025)

The [Disability Employee Resource Group](#) is a voluntary group of Holland Bloorview employees that identify as having any type of disability. The group was created to provide a safe space to build community, share experiences, peer support, and provide opportunities for advocacy for accessibility and inclusion. The group focuses on disability pride. The employee resource group will progress towards these goals through meetings throughout the year, social gatherings, and promoting disability related education at Holland Bloorview.

In-house education: Disability Inclusion at Work

Holland Bloorview has joined the Ontario Corporate Training Centre (OCTC), a federally funded initiative to support disability-inclusive employment. The [OCTC e-learning modules](#) are another way staff can learn about and discuss disability inclusion in our workplace. This aligns with the work of our Disability ERG, our IDEAA and people & culture teams and our healthy team strategic priorities. The module is available for staff to complete until December 1, 2025.

Microsoft Copilot Pilot Program (Fall 2024 – onwards)

Holland Bloorview has harnessed the advantages of Microsoft 365 Copilot and related AI tools which can empower employees with disabilities and neurodivergent conditions, improve organizational key performance indicators (KPIs) around strategic accessibility and disability inclusion goals and foster inclusion. For example:

- **Blind Users:** Copilot summarizes emails, documents, and chats, prepares meetings, creates presentations, and describes images for users relying on screen readers and braille keyboards.

- **Mobility Disabilities:** Copilot reduces keystrokes, assists with team collaboration, meeting notes, email drafting, and presentation creation, supporting voice navigation and dictation.
- **Dyslexic/Neurodivergent Users:** Copilot simplifies language, summarizes documents and videos, drafts emails and blogs, and recaps chats to support reading comprehension and writing.
- **Autistic/Neurodivergent Users:** Copilot helps prioritize communications, assess meeting tone, track unanswered questions, analyze data, and coach email tone.
- **Non-native English Speakers:** Copilot interprets messages, summarizes meetings and chats, structures presentations, drafts emails, and ensures clarity in communications.

Accessible Gym Equipment

Holland Bloorview installed its first piece of [accessible workout equipment](#) in the staff fitness centre: a plinth table. This adaptive equipment provides a raised, stable surface that makes stretching and exercise more accessible for staff with mobility challenges - promoting safety, comfort and independence.

Employment

Inspire, Hire, Train, Retain

The [Inspire, Hire, Train, Retain \(IHTR\) resource](#) supports disability-inclusive workplaces across Ontario's health care sector.

In 2024, Holland Bloorview was granted funding for Enabling Inspire, Hire, Train, Retain: Co-designing resources with and for Ontario healthcare organizations to promote inclusive workforces. The design process took 12 months and included representatives from over 70 organizations. This project co-created, developed and delivered a "training-in-a-box" to prepare healthcare managers to hire, engage and retain workers with disabilities by increasing knowledge on accessibility and confidence for inclusion.

The end result in 2025 is IHTR training materials that are free to all Ontario health-care organization, adaptable to organizational needs and examples, and connected to best-practice resources. The content draws from current best practices in the disability-inclusive employment sector, and is all presented from a health care perspective.

Inclusive Healthcare (clients and families)

Accessible Bedside Sleep options for inpatient caregivers

Parents with access rights to their child, legal guardians, and other designated caregivers may be at the bedside of a Holland Bloorview inpatient during their stay. The hospital provides a “sleeper chair” for this purpose. However, the sleeper chairs are standard design and may not meet the physical accessibility needs of a caregiver who wishes to stay at bedside overnight.

In January 2025, a revised decision-making framework was developed to ensure that requests for alternative options to the sleeper chair to facilitate staying bedside with an inpatient overnight will be considered through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens and where possible, a solution will be co-created with the caregiver and hospital management. It is also anticipated that we will source funding to purchase several adapted sleeper beds to meet caregiver needs.

Emergency Transportation Fund

The Emergency Transportation Fund (ETF) was relaunched in 2024 after a three year hiatus. Its primary objective is to ensure that critical resources are accessible to all families during non-medical emergencies. New for 2025/2026 clinicians will be able to request parking passes OR gas cards. The ETF is set to end on March 31, 2027.

The ETF covers transportation needs such as non-medical inpatient transport to the community (weekend passes), assistance with alternate travel arrangements if original plans fall through, and alleviating onsite parking costs.

Disability Inclusion Awareness

Campaign to Build Centre of Excellence in Childhood Disability

In September 2025, the Holland Bloorview Foundation launched a [“Together We Dare.”](#) a \$100 million fundraising campaign featuring kids challenging potential donors to shape the future of disability health care for kids.

Together We Dare is the largest fundraising campaign for pediatric disability in Canadian history. The campaign will establish the Centre of Excellence in Childhood Disability, and will transform healthcare and create a more inclusive world for children with disabilities.

Together We Dare aims to address profound gaps in healthcare for children and youth with disabilities in Canada and globally. Despite 10% of the world’s population being children with disabilities, only 1% of healthcare philanthropy in Canada supports them. The campaign will fuel world-leading care, unlock new discoveries through research,

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and build a more inclusive world for children with disabilities and/or developmental differences.

Establishment of the National Disability Initiative Working (NDI) Group.

The NDI is a 5-year initiative that was established in December 2024, thanks to [The Slaight Family Foundation's historic \\$30 million gift](#) in support of Canadians with disabilities. Led by Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation and Rick Hansen Foundation, the working group includes representatives from 11 grantee disability organizations and 4 community members with lived experience.

The National Disability Initiative Working Group is responsible for overseeing The Slaight Family Foundation's investment and working towards disability inclusion, accessibility, and equity. The group will support collaboration, cross-organizational partnerships, and capacity building among grantees. This initiative operates independently and does not replace any other national or regional network, coalition, committee, or council focused on disability inclusion or accessibility.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 2024)

For the first time in Holland Bloorview's history, the Disability Pride flag was raised in acknowledgement of IDPWD.

National AccessAbility Week (June 2025)

National AccessAbility Week is a time to highlight the importance of accessibility and inclusion in our communities. This year, we highlighted an example of in action where new automatic door openers have been installed throughout the hospital, making more spaces more accessible for staff with mobility challenges and promoting safety and independence.

Disability Pride Month (July 2025)

Holland Bloorview continues to celebrate the achievements of people with disabilities and continuing a rich tradition of activism. An interactive display in the cafeteria encouraged clients, families and staff to consider what disability pride meant to them.

Looking Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

For more details, please reference Holland Bloorview's [Multi-year Accessibility Plan 2021 - 2026](#), **p. 27 – 30 Future Accessibility Plans** which focus on infrastructure modifications.

Other highlights we want to continue exploring in 2026:

- **Introduction of alternatives to overhead paging system for emergency codes** where our goal is to ensure these announcements are accessible to all, including staff members who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as individuals with other sensory disabilities, visitors, and clients/families.
- **Continuing to be top employer and to model best practices** to explore integrating current accommodation and accessibility planning practices.
- **A renewed focus on ableism in healthcare**, and supporting additional education in this regard as well as creating a space for the Disability Employee Resource Group to evolve and provide timely input.

Please let us know if you have any questions or feedback about activities, initiatives, and programs highlighted in this report and in the 2021-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as well as accessibility matters in general.

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