

## **ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY – 2005**

### **Herrold and Vernon Mission Statement**

*To exceed our clients' needs and expectations; to act with integrity, objectivity and consistency; to be mindful that behind every referral and assessment is a person deserving our respect and understanding.*

### **Guiding Principles – Excerpt from Regulation 429/07**

*Customer Service Standards:*

*3. (2) The provider shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:*

*1. The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.*

*2. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.*

*3. Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.*

As a responsible and caring provider of independent medical assessments, Herrold and Vernon continuously strives to meet or exceed or client expectations including the provision of services to clients who may have permanent or temporary disabilities. According to the Government of Ontario, a disability is defined as:

*(a) 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;*

In order to insure compliancy with this regulation, Herrold and Vernon has utilized the above mentioned principles, along with our mission statement to define our policies, practices and procedures in regards to serving clients with visible and non-visible impairments.

HVE's AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) Policy is to be followed by all resources whether they are management, administrative or contracted consultative professionals. In regards to locations, the policy is to be followed by any resource or resources providing services anywhere on behalf of Herrold and Vernon.

### **Privacy Policy:**

Due to the nature of HVE's business, most client accommodation requirements will be known prior to their arrival on HVE premises. Information regarding the customer's needs will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only utilizing our Privacy Policy as a guideline. Where required, the consultative professional is permitted to privately advise reception staff of any specific requirements that may or may not be evident in order to properly greet, serve or assist the client upon arrival. Please note that the information/details imparted to any staff member are to remain private. Understanding a client's needs will allow HVE to set the proper tone from the moment they arrive for their assessment until their departure preserving their dignity and independence.

## **Accommodations Policy:**

HVE assessment locations have been selected based on specific criteria to ensure convenience and accessibility. This includes but is not limited to:

- Office locations which are on major or primary streets/roads
- Availability of free surface parking including designated handicapped spaces.
- Ramp access and dependent on the incline of the ramp, appropriate railing supports.
- Automated doors with switches within wheelchair reach
- Visible signage clearing denoting the address
- Accessible washrooms with appropriate amenities (i.e. stalls, handrails, sinks and related amenities).
- Proximity to major transit routes (in urban locations)
- Where the assessment office is not located on the ground floor, elevator access via the main lobby.
- Reception/lobby areas and assessment rooms, free from obstructions to assist visually and physically impaired clients. Flooring surfaces that are in good repair, even without slant/slope and no carpet snags/unravelling, missing tiles etc. Minimal or flat transition channels between flooring tiles and/or carpeting.
- Doorways which are wide enough to accommodate a walker or wheelchair. Door handles which can be easily reached from a client who relies on a wheelchair.

## **Assisted Devices Policy:**

Any person attending a HVE location or calling our office will be accommodated courteously and without fail in a manner which allows them to communicate, be mobile or assists them in any method to maintain their quality of life. Assistance devices are permitted as the client's comfort and requirement for accommodation takes precedence.

- **Service Animals:** This is normally a dog but can be any animal which provides assistance to an individual (i.e. Seeing Eye, mobility assistance, Hearing Ear).
- **Remedial, Mechanical or Electronic Devices:** These items are but are not limited to: canes, walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, text to speech translators and vice versa, magnifiers, and hearing aids.
- **Companions:** Clients are welcome to bring attendance companions to act as their interpreter (i.e. ASL – American Sign Language), facilitate mobility or generally attend their needs.

### **Communications Policy:**

- During the intake/referral process, accommodation requirements will most likely be received by the referring party or organization. Every effort will be made to communicate with the individual in the manner which they prefer which may include:
  - E-mail, text or TTY (telephone for the hearing impaired)
  - Via a third party/relative designated by the client.
- Where the customer indicates/requests or it is noted in the referral, a qualified ASL (American Sign Language) will be engaged using our standard practice to attend the assessment and follow-up appointment.
- For visually impaired clients who utilize a text to speech device or a magnifier, notes/reports should be provided to them utilizing a legible font (versus handwriting). Standard fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial or Verdana are suggested choices if the client has no specific preference.
- Hearing impaired clients who utilize lip-reading can be easily accommodated by ensuring that you speak to them ‘full face’ towards them, annunciate clearly (while avoiding raising your voice) and that lighting is conducive to allow clear line of sight between parties.

- Visually impaired clients who do not utilize text to speech technology (via Microsoft Word or handheld) should be offered their portion of the assessment report in Braille.
- Where an interpreter or companion is present, please address your questions/comments/conversation to the client and not the party providing assistance.

### **Accommodations Availability:**

HVE's mandate will be posted on signage at regional assessment centres. All satellite locations will be advised that signage must be posted and adherence to the legislation is a requirement as part of our affiliation with each location. Additionally, compliance with the policy will be added to HVE's website ([www.herroldandvernon.com](http://www.herroldandvernon.com)).

In the event that accommodation cannot be provided globally or at any HVE location or satellite site, the abovementioned website will be updated stating such and where possible/appropriate a date when services will be reinstated along with signage denoting the same at the affected location(s).

### **HVE Staff Training:**

All HVE staff will be trained on the policy and the addition of the applicable material will be reviewed with each and every new hire as part of the company's 'On-Boarding' Process.

### **Fees:**

There are no fees associated with providing requirements for accommodation such as alternative media.

## **Customer Feedback:**

As part of HVE's Quality Management System and the continuous improvement lifecycle, our feedback survey includes questions regarding AODA. Feedback received will be utilized to improve our service offerings and accommodations to better service our customers. A copy of this survey can be provided in written format or can be viewed online at [www.herroldandvernon.com](http://www.herroldandvernon.com).