

## **ACCESSIBILITY: INTERACTING WITH AND PROVIDING SERVICE TO CLIENTS WHO HAVE INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

### **POLICY:**

Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) is committed to meeting the Accessibility needs of all person with disabilities in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards O.Reg. 191/11 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*.

### **PREAMBLE:**

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit the person's ability to learn, communicate, socialize and take care of his/her everyday needs. You may not know that someone has this type of disability unless you are told.

As much as possible, treat your client/patient with an intellectual or developmental disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate that you treat them with respect.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **Assistive Devices:**

An assistive device is a tool, technology, or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating, or lifting. It helps the person to maintain their independence at home, at work, and in the community. The following assistive devices may be used by persons who have intellectual or developmental disabilities:

- Communication board – used to pass on a message by pointing to symbols, words, or pictures
- Speech generating device – used to pass on a message using a device that “speaks” when a symbol, word, or picture is pressed
- Service animal
- Support person

### **GUIDELINES:**

- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences
- To confirm if your client/patient understands what you have said, consider asking the person to repeat the message back to you in his or her own words
- If you cannot understand what is being said, simply ask again
- Provide one piece of information at a time
- Be supportive and patient
- Speak directly to your client/patient, not to their companion or support person

### **REFERENCES:**

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.