



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
Elgin - Middlesex  
*Mental health for all*

**Association canadienne  
pour la santé mentale**  
Elgin - Middlesex  
*La santé mentale pour tous*

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020– 2022)**

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## **CEO Message**

CMHA Elgin Branch believes in equal opportunity and is committed to providing a barrier-free environment that allows all individuals to maintain their independence and dignity. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and its associated Regulations and strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner. This plan will be reviewed every five years in consultation with the Lived Experience Advisory Committee.

## **Introduction**

CMHA Elgin Branch Vision is an inclusive community with mental health and well-being for all. With services available in London, Strathroy, Elgin Branch County, Exeter, Goderich and Clinton, CMHA Elgin Branch strives to meet the needs of individuals-served with disabilities, as well as its employees, candidates for employment, peer supports, student placements, volunteers, and guests. The organization has worked hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility and to integrate appropriate language, policies, procedures, standards and practises into every aspect of its work. CMHA Elgin Branch is in compliance with legislative obligations for accessibility. This plan shows how CMHA Elgin Branch will play a role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

## **Section One: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers**

### ***Customer Service***

CMHA Elgin Branch remains in compliance with the Customer Service Standard. All employees are trained to ensure that they can identify, remove, and prevent customer service barriers for individuals with disabilities. Support persons and support animals are accommodated for individuals who require these supports when engaging in services at CMHA Elgin Branch.

From the Strategies and Actions for 2017, CMHA Elgin Branch Human Resources consistently assigns AODA Refresher online training to all staff on an annual basis. As well, all staff are now required to complete an online Crisis Intervention Refresher training which includes components related to providing appropriate service for individuals with disabilities.

Employees are required to complete additional training annually on the Human Rights Code to ensure that they provide accessible service, which was a required training that was added in 2017.

CMHA Elgin Branch uses its Values Statements to instill a culture of inclusion and provide exceptional customer service to individuals with disabilities. Employees are trained on the Values Statements during orientation and annually as part of their Performance Review.

CMHA Elgin Branch has expanded its means of engaging with individuals with disabilities by providing a range of options for obtaining services. These options include an online self-refer “Welcome” form, support-assisted referral, in addition to the more traditional means of on-site response, telephone response, and email response. Individuals can also be served at alternate locations that may decrease the barriers that an individual may encounter when seeking services.

The implementation of the Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA) by CMHA Elgin Branch has helped to address health equity and social inclusion (HESI) within its services. The use of this tool has been expanded and is actively reviewed as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

### ***Information and Communications***

CMHA Elgin Branch has successfully implemented a variety of methods to gather input from individuals-served, employees, peer supports, student placements, and volunteers on barriers to accessibility. These include easily-accessible email option for feedback, after-hours answering service allows individuals to provide feedback at their convenience, inclusion of a feedback form as part of the Client Handbook, having suggestion boxes located at various CMHA Elgin Branch sites, implementation of the Ontario Perception of Care (OPOC) tool, offering various methods of completion of the OPOC tool, using various Committees (ie. Healthy Workplace Committee / Lived Experience Advisory Committee) as well as having members of the Leadership Team actively representing CMHA Elgin Branch on various community committees as ways of gather input and provide feedback to the Leadership Team.

### ***Employment***

CMHA Elgin Branch ensures that all interested candidates for employment are aware of the organization’s willingness to accommodate applicants with disabilities throughout the recruitment process, including a

declaration on the CMHA Elgin Branch website, a declaration on each job posting, an active offer of accommodation as part of the interview process, and is reaffirmed during the offer process. Employees of CMHA Elgin Branch are made aware through policies that the organization will provide individualized workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities, as necessary. Employees are aware that CMHA Elgin Branch has a process to identify and meet employee accommodation needs.

## **Section Two: Strategies and Actions**

### ***Customer Service***

CMHA Elgin Branch is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. All of the programs and services provided to individuals with disabilities will be of the same high quality and timelines as others. Leadership is committed to working with their staff to promote and discuss new ideas and opportunities in which to offer alternative methods of supporting individuals with disabilities. CMHA Elgin Branch will add accessible customer service as a regular leadership meeting agenda item, effective January, 2019.

CMHA Elgin Branch will continue to actively seek out employees who demonstrate a valuable skill-set of providing supports that ensure equity in the workplace. This strategy has been of value in the past and is an area for further development within the organization. The Leadership Team at CMHA Elgin Branch will initiate the development of a component in this regard for its “Leadership Development Series” training prior to the end of December, 2019.

### ***Information and Communications***

Individuals are made aware of a variety of methods of providing feedback to CMHA Elgin Branch. The growth of the organization and the number of sites could be considered barriers to providing feedback. In this regard, the Leadership Team at CMHA Elgin Branch must ensure a commitment to providing methods of feedback in all new programs and at all locations where individuals receive service. This will be assigned to the Quality Improvement and Performance Officer by April 1, 2019, who will also initiate an appropriate schedule for reviewing any feedback received.

Using a variety of communication methods to share emergency procedures, emergency plans, and public safety information is reviewed regularly by the Leadership Team at CMHA Elgin Branch. The growth of the organization and the number of sites could be considered a barrier to ensuring adequate communication during an emergency. In this regard, the Leadership Team must be committed to developing, communicating, and implementing processes that ensure appropriate communication methods are used for sharing emergency procedures, emergency plans, and public safety information. Effective April 1, 2019, the Quality Improvement and Performance Officer will take on the responsibility of ensuring that a process is created for each new site as part of its development.

An accessible website and web content is an important accessibility requirement. Any changes made to the website by contracted vendors is reviewed to ensure compliance. A lack of resources to dedicate towards oversight may be a potential barrier. The Leadership Team will ensure that there is at least one employee who is knowledgeable of the accessibility requirements for information and communication, and that employee will be responsible for ensuring compliance when changes are made to the website, web content, and any other social media platforms used by CMHA Elgin Branch to provide information to the public. This review will be completed by the Communications Coordinator on an annual basis by the end of each calendar year, commencing 2019, with any updates being initiated by the end of the following fiscal year, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

CMHA Elgin Branch will continue to use the OPOC results specifically around the environment (the program accommodated any needs related to mobility, hearing, vision and learning, etc.) to identify areas for improvement and to create action plans to address these areas. The Leadership Team at CMHA Elgin Branch must ensure a commitment to continually reviewing feedback received and making adjustments, as necessary. CMHA is committed to following through on appropriate adjustments within three months following an area's review of the feedback.

CMHA Elgin Branch will ensure that it utilizes the appropriate OPOC format to accommodate individual impairments once these formats are made available, as they are currently under development through CAMH. The Quality Improvement and Performance Officer will communicate to CMHA Elgin Branch as information is made available by CAMH.

### ***Employment***

Human Resources will continue to review and revise the language used in the recruitment process to reflect the “Hire For Talent” steps outlined in the Community Business Development Corporation document, as available through the Government of Canada. Initial implementation will begin July, 2019.

Human Resources will continue to review and revise the language used in its job descriptions to ensure that it is reflective of the essential functions, to more effectively accommodate an employee. Human Resources will review and revise the job descriptions for one program by the end of the fiscal year, 2019-2020.

### ***New or Redevelopment of Public Spaces, including Spaces for Obtaining Services***

CMHA Elgin Branch is committed to engaging accessibility consultants to ensure that any future new or redeveloped public spaces will meet or exceed accessibility requirements. This will include the redevelopment / new build of any outdoor paths of travel to and from CMHA Elgin Branch public sites, as well as accessible on and off-street parking, any service counters and waiting areas. The Leadership Team will ensure that at least one Manager is assigned to gather feedback from individuals with disabilities and to oversee accessibility requirements for future new or redevelopment public spaces that are not covered by the Ontario Building Code. Managers will be informed on this process by April 2019 and further educated as part of the Leadership Development series.

### ***Maintenance of Accessible Elements***

CMHA Elgin Branch uses maintenance contracts to ensure that the accessible elements for all sites remain in good working order and that procedures are in place for handling temporary disruptions if an accessible element is not in working order. The growth of the organization, and staffing changes could be a barrier for ensuring that appropriate and timely notice is provided for temporary disruptions to accessible elements. The Leadership of CMHA Elgin Branch must ensure that employees at all sites are familiar with the procedure for communicating a temporary disruption to an accessible element at a site.

CMHA Elgin Branch is committed to ensuring that employees use a variety of methods to communicate any possible service disruptions for accessible elements and to finding alternative solutions to address

service disruptions. The Quality Improvement and Performance Officer will ensure that these communications are part the site specific emergency and disaster plans by April 1, 2019.