ACCESSIBILITY: INTERACTING WITH AND PROVIDING SERVICE TO CLIENTS WHO HAVE SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS

POLICY:

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

PREAMBLE:

Some people have problems communicating because of their disability. Cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or other conditions may make it difficult to pronounce words or may cause slurring or stuttering. They also may prevent the person from expressing him/herself or prevent him/her from understanding written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

DEFINITIONS:

Assistive Device:

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 his/her independence at home, at work, and in the community. The following assistive devices may be used by persons who have speech or language impairments:
- Communication board
- Paper and pen
- Speech-generating device
- Support person

GUIDELINES:

- Don't assume that because a person has one disability they also have another. For example, if a client/patient has difficulty speaking, it doesn't mean he/she has an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
- Ask your client/patient to repeat the information if you don't understand.
- Ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no" if possible.
- Try to allow enough time to communicate with your client/patient as he/she may speak more slowly.
- Don't interrupt or finish your client/patient's sentences. Wait for him/her to finish.

REFERENCES:

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation429/07. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).