

## ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

### How Opticians Can Ensure their Practices are Accessible

*This bulletin summarizes key responsibilities that opticians who are employers have in ensuring accessibility for all persons with disabilities. Every optician has a role to play in ensuring patients and colleagues with disabilities are treated equally and with dignity. Employers have additional legal obligations to their patients, to employees, and to the public.*

Opticians who employ at least one person in Ontario are subject to the ***Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)***. As an employer, you must:

- Have a Customer Service Accessibility Policy and other accessibility-related policies. These policies should include a commitment to welcoming service animals and support persons, and provide accessible ways for people to give feedback
- Train your staff on the AODA, your accessibility policies, and on the *Human Rights Code* as it relates to disability
- Provide accessible emergency and public safety information, including to staff
- Consider accessibility when buying or designing self-service kiosks
- Make public information accessible, on request
- Make employment practices accessible, including by providing accommodations for job candidates and employees
- By January 1, 2018, ensure that any newly designed or redesigned public spaces are accessible, including waiting areas, service counters, and parking lots

If you employ more than 20 people, the AODA sets out additional requirements. The Government of Ontario has many [resources](#) available to help all Ontario employers to comply.

Failing to meet these obligations may result in loss of patient dignity, findings of professional misconduct, a penalty or compliance order under the AODA, and/or a human rights complaint.

*If you have questions about accessibility or other practice issues, you can contact the College at 416 368-3616 or [mail@coptont.org](mailto:mail@coptont.org), or visit our website at [www.collegeofopticians.ca](http://www.collegeofopticians.ca).*

#### Resources:

- Government of Ontario AODA resource page: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws>
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>
- *Human Rights Code*, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>
- COO standards of practice, [https://collegeofopticians.ca/sites/default/uploads/files/Standards\\_of\\_Practice.pdf](https://collegeofopticians.ca/sites/default/uploads/files/Standards_of_Practice.pdf)