

REACHING COMPLIANCE WITH THE ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD: CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGES

This article was written by [People Access](#) a division of [Excellence Canada](#), formally known as the National Quality Institute.

The first standard under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) is now in force. All organizations with one employee or more in both the private and non-profit sectors must comply with the [Accessible Customer Service Standard](#) by January 1, 2012.

To help Colleges and their Members meet this compliance date, several Colleges of the [Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario](#) (including the CRTO) have been part of an advisory committee organized by [People Access](#). The purpose of this committee has been to help inform and support organizations and practitioners in the health care sector to comply with this standard.

To clarify the role the Colleges play in helping Members reach compliance with this standard, we have listed below:

- the responsibilities that appropriately fall within the role of the Colleges and those that will be supported through this Advisory Committee,
- what is not included in the College role, and
- some additional opportunities available.

As employers, Colleges themselves are required to be compliant with the Accessible Customer Service Standard by January 1, 2012. Many Members of individual Colleges may also need to be compliant.

It is important to note that it is the government i.e., [the Ministry of Community and Social Services - Access ON](#), not the Colleges who will be monitoring and enforcing compliance with these regulations and legislation.

What's in Scope for Colleges:

The primary role for Colleges in supporting their Members' compliance is as information conduits. They can support their membership by providing:

- information about the Act and the regulations to raise awareness,
- connections to existing free and low-cost resources,
- links to relevant websites, and
- links to continuing education.

What's Not in Scope for Colleges:

- Colleges are not the educators and trainers of their Members, although they will provide links to training for their Members.
- Colleges are not the regulators of this legislation and don't have to ensure that their Members are compliant.

- Colleges do not have to monitor or carry out enforcement of standards under the AODA.

Opportunities for Colleges:

Through the advisory committee organized by [People Access](#) and supported by funding from the Ontario government, to raise awareness among health care practitioners, we have opportunities to help our members excel in providing accessible service by making available:

- links to Members who are champions in providing accessible services,
- role modeling examples, tools and suggestions,
- statistics on the rate that people open web pages about the AODA and regulations,
- other data on engagement around accessibility and compliance, and
- access to opportunities for recognition sponsored through Excellence Canada through decals, awards and lists of compliant organizations which will be produced and made available through [People Access](#).