**June 20th, 2018**

**Viscount Gort Hotel**

**9:00 am to Noon**

**Effectiveness of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act**

**A Review - Public Forum**

**[AMA] Accessibility for Manitobans Act**

**[DIO] Disability Issues Office**

**[MLPD] Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities**

**[AAC] Accessibility Advisory Council**

**[SMD] Society for Manitobans with Disabilities**

**[BFM] Barrier Free Manitoba**

**Information about the legislation:**

[**www.accessibilitymb.ca**](file:///E:\Users\admn\Documents\www.accessibilitymb.ca)

**To give feedback on the act's review:**

**reviewofama@gmail.com**

**Disability Issues Office:**

[**https://www.gov.mb.ca/dio/**](https://www.gov.mb.ca/dio/)

**[9:00AM – Event begins]**

**Theresa Harvey Pruden:**

Good morning everybody, I'm Theresa, I've been meeting with key stakeholders and community organizations serving Manitobans with disabilities and today we welcome individual Manitobans as well as groups representing service providers and the interest of those in our society dealing with challenges to full participation in all facets of life here in Manitoba.

It would be premature to comment on the review's findings at this early juncture except to say that I'm greatly impressed and encouraged by the level of interest and passion I've experienced among those I've met so far. With respect to our gathering here today I'm aware that on any day and time some folks who have important things to say will be unable to attend due to busy schedules, capacity to travel or living far from Winnipeg.

To maximize the opportunity for all Manitobans to be heard, we established through the DIO [Disabilities Issues Office] website, it's not a governmental website, it's a Gmail address, so that people can make any contributions that they wish to make in complete confidentiality. In addition, we have setup a webinar, that's what has made us just a few minutes late, in addition to having ASL interpretation here in the room we also have, on the webinar, a scroll will be going across so anyone who's hearing impaired will be able to know what's going on.

Anyone who's not able to be here today will be able to go to the webinar and it will be available very soon after today's event.

They will hear everything that goes on, their input and comment, and they will be able to respond to us by email with anything they think is important or that we should hear. If there's any follow-up we're only a phone call away, so hopefully we can get as many voices heard on this topic as possible.

My job today is to listen, therefore I've asked Lucia, my able colleague who's been loaned to me, who's an experienced facilitator, to lead the forum from here on in. In addition, we've recruited volunteer rapporteurs to lead each table's discussion.

To promote broad discourse, it's my hope that those of you who are attending with colleagues from your organization will create as many opportunities to meet and interact as possible with participants from lots of different organizations.

Enough from me, we've got a busy morning, I'm going to turn it over to Lucia to provide a brief on the legislation and the processes undertaken to date.

**Lucia Madariaga-Vignudo:**

Good morning everyone, my name is Lucia, and I have been asked to assist Theresa with this review of accessibility legislation. I want to acknowledge that today's forum is located on treaty 1 territory, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe people and the homeland of the metis nation. It's really wonderful to see so many of you here, I was looking at the list of participants and we have a great cross section of individuals who are citizens but also those representing organizations affected by this legislation in Manitoba.

Some logistics before I get on to a brief presentation about the legislation.

Washrooms are outside and across the hall, as Theresa mentioned we do have captioning available as well as ASL interpretation, that's being provided, and today's written material is available in large print or braille at the registration desk, if you'd like. We also have personal care attendants at the back of the room who are here to assist, and last but not least there's coffee and cookies so help yourselves throughout the morning and we'll get going.

With respect to the structure of this morning's forum you should all have an agenda, and after a brief presentation we want to give you the opportunity to get into tables and engage in discussions, we have about 10 groups, and share your views and your experiences on the implementation on the Accessibility for Manitobans Act since it came into force since December 2013.

We are also very interested to hear about your very innovative and feasible solutions, on what can be done going forward to implement accessibility legislation. There will be a 15-minute break at around quarter after ten and at around 11:15AM a volunteer from each table will be asked to report back to the larger group with a summary of the discussion. I don't mean to be strict but we are limited on time, so rapporteurs if you could keep your presentation to 3-5 minutes, that would be greatly appreciated.

We recognize that there is a lot of ground to cover this morning and I just want to make sure everyone knows that all of the notes taken at the tables will be collected and then analyzed by Theresa, so we will be taking all of the notes back for further analysis. So on to the very brief presentation because we want to give you as much time as possible to talk and engage in discussion.

I might need a little bit of assistance here.

So, the Accessibility for Manitobans Act [AMA] has two main goals:

To identify, prevent and remove barriers to participation.

And also to make a long-term commitment to achieve significant progress on accessibility by 2023 and make Manitoba a more inclusive province for everybody. The act came into force about four and a half years ago, December of 2013, and now according to the act it's time to review how it's been implemented so far.

When we talk about barriers, a barrier is anything that interacts with a disability in a way that may hinder a person's full and effective participation on any equal basis. As you can see there are a range of different barriers outlined in the legislation itself:

Physical, architectural, information or communication, attitudinal, technological, and they can also be barriers that are established or perpetuated by a policy or practice.

The legislation in Manitoba, the AMA, applies to all organizations in Manitoba that provide goods or services. These are public, private and not for profit organizations. With respect to the public sector, these organizations must have accessibility plans and they must also comply with the accessibility standards. Private and not for profits sectors don't necessarily need by law to have an accessibility plan but, like the public sector, must comply with accessibility standards.

So as you can see this piece of legislation is very far reaching, it affects a range of entities:

Businesses, school divisions, regional health authorities, universities, boards, commissions, and so forth, and so it's a very important piece of legislation.

Fundamental to achieving accessibility in Manitoba is the development of accessibility standards that as I said: government, public, private, and nonprofit sectors must comply with. Currently in Manitoba there is one accessibility standard in force: the customer service standard.

The government of Manitoba is committed to developing additional standards in the areas of employment, transportation, information and communication, as well as the built environment. So if accessibility standards are building blocks of the legislation itself it begs the question how are these standards created.

The accessibility advisory council plays a major role in these standards and is responsible for developing the proposed standards. They may as according to legislation establish groups and experts for that goal. Consultations with affected communities and members of the public like yourselves are extremely important in the development of these standards.

The accessibility advisory council here in Manitoba receives support from the Disabilities Issues Office, which is the office of government that advances accessibility on behalf of our government.

The customer service standard is the only standard currently enforced, and what it does is it requires organizations to have policies and practices to deliver accessible customer service for persons with disabilities. at each table there should be at least 2 copies of the customer service standard which you’ll have a chance to look at. It lists a number of requirements.

Some examples are organizations that organize public events, such as this one, those events should be accessible. Ensuring, as another example, that service animals have the right of access to areas where the public is allowed. As they are developed the standards, there will be further requirements.

Compliance is another aspect of the legislation, there is a section in the AMA that deals with compliance, the act requires the appointment of a director of compliance, currently that's the deputy minister of the department of families, Judy Rodgers. With respect to compliance, organizations are required to comply with standards within specified timeframes.

The minister may also appoint any person as an inspector for the purpose of the act, and penalties may be imposed for noncompliance as per the act.

Reporting on accessibility is also important, the minister responsible for the act, Scott Fielding, is required to release to the public 2 separate reports each year. One is the Minister's annual plan which sets out activities the government of Manitoba will carry out within a year and then there's the annual report which reports on whether those actions have been successful. In addition to that the accessibility advisory council is required to produce a summary of minutes and upload those on the government website for members of the public to see.

And last, but perhaps not least, is the topic or the notion of awareness raising and training, an important part of making Manitoba more accessible. This is where the DIO develops and conducts public education activities to increase awareness about the act.

**There are a number of resources available at:**

[**www.AccessibilityMB.ca**](http://www.AccessibilityMB.ca)

This concludes my very general presentation on the legislation and standards and I'm not sure where we are on time but we want to make sure you have as much time as possible to engage in the group discussions. What I will ask, we have these wonderful volunteers here at this table, I will ask volunteers, maybe 2 a table, we'll have 10 tables, and about 8-9 people per table, and really engage in fruitful discussion. We want to hear as much as possible and we want honest feedback from you. As well as personal care attendants going around the room to set up flip charts and so forth. We'll get started and we'll reconvene again at 11:15AM.

**[10:30AM - Small group discussions]**

**[11:15AM - Large group discussion)**

It's just after eleven fifteen, and I want to make sure every table has the opportunity to report back to the larger group. If by any chance you haven't been able to cover all that you wanted to cover, please know there's still an opportunity to provide feedback after today by e-mailing us at:

**reviewofama@gmail.com**

We want to make sure each table is able to report back to the larger group.

Perhaps we will ask Lisa's table, Table #1, to come up and share with us what the group discussed and what were some of the most important points that you'd like.

**Table #1: Lisa Snider**

I get to be first which means I have to think very quickly, we had great discussions and ideas, that table was awesome, thanks everyone.

In the first discussion we went through and the general consensus was to provide more awareness or notice of timelines, processes. Maybe use TV and radio. It tends to be organizations that get out the word, government that gets out the word, but people at my table didn’t see a lot else, so they would often be made aware of things at the last minute.

My table wanted input sessions before the sessions are developed, and the timelines were definitely discussed in terms of that first issue.

On the customer service part, my table thought that business should be focused on, that's a really important part, with rural areas focused on as well, businesses just need more awareness. Because with awareness, we can get more stuff done, pardon me I’m looking at my notes here.

A brilliant idea we had was that government could use the registration, like all businesses should be registered, the government could send a mail out to all businesses saying, "hey the AMA is here, here's what you have to do, and "hey here's the DIO and here's some resources", and that would help.

The other things we had here, I'm just looking at my things here, I get to be first here, lucky me.

In terms of the second discussion, the second part we had, many at the table didn't know about the minister's reports or plans, they didn't know about the advisory council.

The theme that came through was more awareness of the whole process that's out there. Although there might be a website with all those resources people didn't know that they were there.

If government could do press releases, to say, that could go on TV and Radio, and say "hey we're doing a new standard" or "there's a public input session", that kind of thing, they'd like to see more coverage there.

I'm just going to read from my big things here.

For the DIO, more the DIO than the council, they need more funding, more staff, it felt they were underfunded and understaffed, and as well the government as a whole could actually work with the community more. My table thought in a way the DIO is only so many people, and it would be great if the government in some fashion worked with the communities and then the community members could go out and help business figure out stuff and get resources and talk to people about issues and that sort of thing.

So just more connection with the community is a thing that came through, more awareness about everything in the process in different ways.

Funding, grants, our table felt those were needed to actually get things done in terms of the standards.

And also, another thing with the DIO and the standards development: the table felt that the process of nomination and getting on the standard developments committee and talking to committees should be a more open process, because nobody at my table knew what that process was, so that has to come out more.

And maybe have a larger advisory council, even though it gets large and you have other issues, but a larger council with people with different disabilities, because the awareness of the advisory council, there wasn't a huge amount of it.

Just one more thing, the government, and oh, the table would like to see the government ask the MLAs to talk to the minister directly to give the minister their reports if they don't already do so at this time. The constituency could talk to the MLAs and then the MLAs can talk directly to the minister and that would help the minister with his or her report or plan for the next year, it would just get more input into the higher levels of government than my table believes is there now.

So in the end it's basically awareness, and funding, and also getting those rural areas in there as well.

So now we have Table #2, I think that's Steve's table.

**Table #2: Steve Lupky**

I'll try and articulate this as best I can, we had great discussion around our table with complex ideas, hopefully I'm able to speak to them and do them justice.

In regards to the standard development process, first off we did feel the timelines as they stand now and how things have dragged out, we felt the forecast timelines didn't feel they were very realistic for the act to roll out by the end of the current government's mandate. In order to see that actually stand a chance of being rolled out we need an increase in resources in terms of available staff and the DIO department, and other government resources.

we did see as well a particular concern about the built environment, and it needing to be a priority. The longer the act is dragged out there are permanent barriers being erected in the meantime, and if you take a decade plus to roll out the act you have a decade plus of barriers that might have to be taken down or adapted at some point. it would be good to see another priority on the built environment although we do recognize the other standards are also vital.

We also thought residential space should definitely be considered, the act, the way it's written itself, there's a private residence exemption for one and two unit dwellings but it also doesn't speak to excluding multi-family, and multi-family dwellings should definitely be addressed: apartments, structures, in the built environment, and it is the foundation for individuals living with disabilities to have an accessible home to transport themselves from, to go to work from, to get to businesses to receive customer service, an accessible home is the foundation.

We just felt there needs to be a larger commitment by the government in reviewing existing legislation, the customer service standard needs more training and awareness.

The adequate resources, as I mentioned, is lacking, and both human resources and financial resources needed, and in order to get compliance we do need to have those resources.

In terms of the provincial budget, we didn't see a lot of AMA consideration in the provincial budget, and we would like to see more of that.

With the compliance framework, it needs more work, it would be good to see a large actionable item done by the government, or a gesture by the government to get the ball rolling.

We also felt that individuals who are kind of the intent of the act to support, there's still individuals missing that are affected by the act, so there needs to be more of a focus with those individuals in consideration.

We thought it was immediately important to see an inspector appointed right away for the process of compliance. As part of the compliance strategy already it says that there may be an inspector appointed but we see that's vital and that needs to be done right away.

There are other governing bodies and frameworks where inspectors will work with businesses that perhaps aren't compliant to a certain standard, they can work with those individuals to help them comply and meet standards and you're not really going to get any of this done without an inspector or a body of inspectors to consult with.

There are also frameworks to follow, an example, workplace safety standards, I know we've talked about this for years, there's easily adaptable standards that could be brought over to help meet compliance.

We did find though, that in terms, when it goes to training of the customer service standard there's inconsistencies in training.

One of the individuals at our table brought forth an example, there was training provided to some organizations. One organization went with a one-hour training seminar and another business went with a full day comprehensive training, so it's not really balanced, or there's no real framework to balance out how the training proceeds.

***Lucia:*** *You have one minute left.*

See, we had a lot of articulate conversation.

In terms of government reporting work, we're concerned with the missed deadlines, as are we all.

We wanted to make sure with the advisory council, we haven't seen a lot of discussion with them lately where we're kind of wondering where the advisory council has gone in all of this, in terms of making their presence known. We want to know, it should be public knowledge and public record in terms of what groups and organizations that the access, that the advisory council, who are they consulting with, and we want to make sure that, we know they're consulting with organizations all across the province but it's not readily known whether or not it represents all of the regions of the province adequately. If you talk to three organizations up north, is that adequate? It's just not widely known in terms of how the consultations are proceeding in that regard.

I'll see if I can skip along further, there's a lot more that we did discuss.

Public awareness, it was mentioned before, but there's a lot more public awareness that's needed. There's things you could do in terms of consulting with different platforms of media, television. Cable Television's not used as much as it previously was, there's streaming and all of that, so web advertisements. There needs to be a public awareness campaign to make individuals and consumers aware as well as businesses and non-profits. It's just so vital to getting this off the ground and knowing what folks can reasonably ask for and expect so they can hold folks to account and get their needs met.

So, I'll try and wrap things up and leave time for the other groups.

In terms of suggestions, you know, just it's vital meeting deadlines, getting inspectors, just kind of summarizing, getting public education done, maybe engaging an advertising firm to help out with the multiple media or multimedia initiatives. We also thought maybe it would be good to have a crowd sourced mechanism or a crowd enforced mechanism in terms of identifying barriers, there are other examples to point to in this regard. This part goes hand in hand with public awareness, if public is aware of this act and they're aware to identify barriers that will go hand in hand with what to expect and how to bring everyone forward together.

So, I hope I did the group justice but really a great discussion around the table and thank you for the opportunity.

**Lucia:** So next up and she's right here ready is Judy's table.

**Table #3: Judy Redmond**

Hi, it's a little difficult to do this up here with these big sheets and we should've found a better way but just to, uh, I had a great group of people around the table and we had lots of great discussion, a lot of it was around education.

So around the standard development process, we talked a little bit about timelines being too long and not met, that they don't think we'll ever make the 2023 deadline, there's not enough of a priority placed on the AMA itself by government, and of course insufficient resources is always an ongoing issue. So a lot of what we talked about has already been said.

As far as the content of the customer service standard itself, it was felt that there's too much focus on direct rules and less on intent and it would be much more efficient to focus on intent, and there was a lot of talk about how do we make the standards change attitudes and that's one gap that is seen to be had that there's still attitudinal issues that are not being changed by the legislation or by the standards that are in place.

There was a comment made that legislation is never law until it goes to court, so compliance, of course, is critical, so we're moving on I guess to implementation and compliance.

Training of people, a person must be trained to use adaptive technology and it states that in the customer service standard and yet we can never train everybody to use every piece of adaptive technology there is out there so that was a little bit of an unrealistic expectation and a good example of where we're too specific in the standards and maybe the intent is more important.

Regulations are too specific, using intent again, we need the spirit of the legislation implemented into the standards.

There was concerns voiced about non-profit organizations being able to meet some of the standards financially and how resources again play into that, and yet having organizations of twenty or more really impedes some individuals from gaining access to smaller business, so how again that twenty or more is a concern.

What constitutes a public event was a question that came up. When we insist that we have public events accessible to all, how does that impact a non-profit organization. For example, when they're having a Christmas party and they're having a Christmas concert, we don't define what some of the issues are like public events very well in the standards. So having again the legislation more generalized with more intent-based information is important.

Expenses are an issue again, so resources, and having a way to ensure there's compliance. There's no information on how to reach somebody, who to complain to, where to report issues to and how that's going to be dealt with, there's very little information on how things are going to actually be dealt with.

Education, there was a lot of talk about having, it was unfortunate there was no education standard in among the standards making sure that children from early ages on are educated in what the act says, what our responsibilities are and what the standards are going, of implementation, are going to be so it's part of the curriculum everyday in schools.

Making sure that government, private industry, and non-profit organizations are working together is another comment that was made, that there's a lot of disparity out there and even among non-profit organizations, working together is really critical, coming up with a common voice which at times doesn’t happen. So it's not us and them, it's all of our jobs to make sure this is implemented.

And then around compliance again, having a framework, we don't have a good framework of compliance, how we would report and how compliance will occur.

Plans are great but we need follow-up, that's one important thing, we don’t have a procedure to follow-up. We don't hear from the compliance officer.

Funding again, funding came up many times.

Having monthly updates, there was a lack of knowledge that there was actually reports being posted from the Disability Issues Office and from the council, so there was a lack of information about that, or just awareness that those are actually being made available.

There was a comment that perhaps there could be a partnership with 311 for more information, so making things more public for, on public service announcements ensuring that 311 is directing people appropriately regarding the legislation and their rights, or who to go to about their rights.

There was some information around online information sometimes not being very user friendly, making sure that it's summarized and very concise and just to the point and not fancy surveys and fancy charts etcetera that are not accessible to everyone. So keep it simple, in other words.

Around awareness raising, make sure the act is part of public school curriculum within 3 years, that was sort of a timeline that everybody thought was reasonable.

Making sure that training is accurate and consistent, so between groups and among groups that there's a consistent approach to delivery.

There was a question of the DIO, where are they getting the information to put in the training, how is it obtained, who are they talking to about that?

As far as leadership of the DIO and the council, it was stated that it may be seen that they are not as effective as they could be, but really, is it really the DIO and the council that are responsible or is it the government? So is it the leadership role that's holding up the process or is it the individuals who are simply staff?

Decision makers are lagging and need to listen to the people who are put in place to guide them.

It would be good to rename the Disability Issues Office, this was an interesting comment, I thought, to the Accessibility Enhancement Office, because it is seen that the Disability Issues Office term, terminology, is fairly negative. Because our legislation is about barrier removal and accessibility not about disability.

Disabilities Issues Office always seems to be reactive and there's too much time being put into putting out fires all the time and not being proactive and again it's just resources.

There's a lot of innovative process and change, significant change.

Eliminate redundancies and red tape, so again that's for senior government.

I guess, in closing, short term long term medium, it was all about delays, it was all about education and training, and making sure service delivery organizations are also knowledgeable enough about the standards and legislation to be able to promote it among the people that they work with. So that's about it, did I miss anything group? No? Okay.

**Lucia:** So next up we have Laura's table, and again if we can just limit the presentations to 5 minutes that would be great.

**Table #4: Laura Schnellert**

We had a very spirited discussion. I want to appreciate Laura who did a fine job facilitating in a gentle and very competent and thorough way. I'm just going to touch on things that haven't been reported on, so lots of common themes but some trade-offs.

I think the standard development process, a slow long and inefficient process, four years and only one standard. There was a view that the process needed to be rethought with much earlier and stronger, more meaningful, consultations, especially with the disability communities. Part of the initial process rather than sort of after six months of a committee meeting to come back with a discussion document that usually is fairly general. So a view changing that and having much stronger and more meaningful consultation early on.

A need for there to be adequate resources to consult, especially form outside of Winnipeg and from various voices of the community that find it difficult to be a part of the process.

So this will be an issue that will be raised a number of times, the indigenous perspective, the extent to which one of every four new entrants to the labor market is indigenous in Manitoba, and yet we often find that indigenous issues aren't looked at, aren't recognized, both urban or off-reserve and on reserve, so that's an issue that kept being raised by our group.

Content of the standard, you know that issue of intent versus specificity, so we have reported there are some training programs that are really poor that people are using and they tick a box, they've done it, so do you define training much more clearly which would be over-defining or do you say intent? And if it's intent and it's badly done how do you provide for consistency in training by third parties, not by DIO.

Um, content, the issue of the standard not having provided for support staff persons to be able to be included, an additional cost seemed to be an important thing that was missing in the standard. So people can have a support staff person but it might come with an additional cost.

The issue, there's no compliance framework within the standard itself so you'd hope there is something in there that wasn't there, skip on to number three.

Implementation, 35,000 organizations have a compliance deadline with the standard by November 1st, 2018. Our view is if there had been a poll or survey done of all those 35,000 organizations less than 1% of them right now would know about the AMA or about what their obligations are.

So if you're implementing the standard, people who are obliged need to know about what it is and you can't expect them to comply if they have not had information about what their requirements are.

We've had two years, we don't know why there hasn't been a more effective communication and marketing program to make sure people do know.

Organizations need tools. In Ontario, on the 12th year they have a program where they fund third party organizations to the tune of 2 to 3 million dollars per year to develop tools for compliance. Our DIO has an overall budget outside of salaries and benefits of $180,000 a year, so there's not been the kind of support for third parties to develop tools they need to comply.

Compliance, there is no compliance framework, so it's hard to comment on what we have, we don't have one. The compliance officer needs to be a dedicated position and not basically just an add-on to a deputy minister's position. What is the process to complain to appeal? So we have no framework to comment upon. We know that workplace health and safety conducts 60,000 inspections per year, so as another group said we have compliance frameworks, we simply haven't adopted one that's meaningful yet for this legislation.

Back to the issue of, how does compliance work for persons living in first nations where there's mixed jurisdiction? So there's concerns about that.

Reporting, check check check, the reports are met, they're on web, they're on the websites, they didn't tend to be late in terms of the minister's report.

The view is the reports meet the letter of the legislation but not the spirit in that there's not true accountability in having something like an annual forum with an exchange of back and forth with the minister responsible would be a much better way to be able to provide accountability. The reports they meet the check boxes but they don't meet the intent of accountability and transparency.

Back to the issue of raising awareness and training, intent of staging public forums seems a really good idea.

Public awareness campaign, we talked about how the issue of seatbelt use, now you just do it without thinking, that required a whole change in the way we think about things, that's what's required for accessibility and we don't, haven't seen that kind of intent to have a change process like that.

Opportunities for training, the opportunities through DIO are limited, partner

organizations, we want to make sure that we don't simply duplicate or import Ontario resources to Manitoba, we want to develop local resources.

Leadership, leadership comes from the top, it doesn't come from the DIO

and it doesn't come from the council, it comes from political leadership and that means the premier and the minister, and frankly they've not been leading a prominent role in terms of leading the charge for change over the last, well since, pretty much since the act was passed. The DIO seems to be more of a policy service facilitator outlet and not a leader, the advisory council

***Lucia:*** *One more minute.*

One minute, that's good, the advisory council is largely invisible, not that they don’t play an important role but no one kind of knows who they are or what they do.

Oh finally, minister number four, what needs to change? We probably need to have a minister who doesn't have to deal with the AMA as being the last of many things they're dealing with but it has to be someone with much more senior responsibility who has direct and almost exclusive, that's their area of responsibility.

The DIO needs to be given resources and authority to play a leadership role. More clear and apparent process for implementing the AMA for training, for tracking.

Robust, what we need is a plan, robust change management plan that says we have between now and 2023, what has to happen when, how's it going to happen, and what resources are required to make it happen?

We need to include more people with lived experience on committees, we need ongoing support for independent capacity within the community to be playing an active role in holding government accountable and doing their own consultations.

We talked about creating financial disincentives for the minister, for every day the report is late a thousand dollars docks off their pay, some kind of way to change the, because when I pay my taxes late apparently I have to pay interest, something that creates financial disincentives would be a good idea.

We thought the idea of having some kind of approval process for training by third parties, the DIO, so we know there's some quality there.

We need to engage first nations communities in all consultations and discussions and again in that issue of sorting out jurisdictional issues, especially for adults with disabilities on and off reserve would be critical.

Thank you.

**Lucia:** Thank you for that, April's table, or, yes there we go. And again if what you are going to present has already been said, you know you can say so and maybe bring up new points that haven't been covered, thank you.

**Table #5: April D’aubin**

We decided we were going to trade off so there's two of us up here. So for standard development the same thing that's been echoed already, we talked about how it's really been a slow process, timeline has burned very long for creating the standards, there's only been one that's been put out thus far.

With respect to that, as well, it even takes time for the departments themselves to put it into effect so if there's something within the standard the departments need to be made aware of that ahead of time so they can get the resources that they require. Further to that if something is being asked within the standard, adequate resources and funding need to be considered if we are requesting change.

For implementation of the customer service standard, we talked about some examples that corporations have done to provide feedback. One of the corporations has an e-mail where customers can go so they can comment on any kind of accessibility issues. We talked about how some disability organizations have been offering education sessions to raise awareness, overall we just felt that more public awareness needs to be done with respect to the AMA.

So for the second question we talked about best practice discussions being really important and that they may help reduce human rights tribunals. We also mention that clarification on the mechanism to address non-compliance which we heard some of already and how do we make the regulations work for each organization or agency.

Consultation with organizations who will help roll out accessibility plans and clarification on how to address post-complaints, so once a complaint has been made how do we learn from it.

For government reporting on accessibility, we view this as an area of improvement, we felt as though ongoing progress reports would be helpful, it would also help to continue drive activity and continue raising awareness on accessibility.

We talked about whether meetings could be held with the advisory council and crown corporations, government corporations, whomever is kind of responsible for the accessibility piece within that department.

And then the leadership function for the Disability Issues Office and accessibility advisory council, we feel as though the DIO needs more resources to carry out the mandate, there's also limited knowledge of the accessibility advisory council and their role which I know has also been echoed by some of the other tables as well.

We also talked about how Barrier Free has played a big role in advertising so perhaps whether more resources need to be made available to them as well or if they can somehow be incorporated into this a little bit more.

Okay and the last question in the first round, how the act was enforced beyond the suggestion through a pamphlet, so how might this be disseminated.

Also a layout for a framework for compliance which we've made note of and we'll get to in our last point talking about inspectors so that there's enforcement.

Knowledge gap that we identified, who's doing what and what the expectations are, so having a community resource so that we know and can access it in that way.

And the last for that section was a priority so again more funding to DIO in order to fully implement mandate, mandated, with the AMA, sorry.

**Lucia:** Next up is Lillian's table.

**Table #6: Lillian Shaw**

Okay for the development process, we think there's not nearly enough awareness of the standards development and implementation, unless you're involved.

We think that it seems like a pretty slow process with delays, and not really sure why, many not at all aware that they have to do the full implementation of the standard by November 1st. There's a huge lack of communication. Okay.

The SMD [Society for Manitobans with Disabilities] is doing a train the trainer program tomorrow, as well as other days, and they'll be able to go out to different organizations and businesses and teach them the standard.

MLPD [Manitoban League for Persons with Disabilities] also has a consultation business and supports to help create the accessibility policies, as well as the customer service standard.

We think that there needs to be communication between all of the different stakeholders.

We think there's a giant concern that smaller and not for profit businesses that don't have HR [Human Resources] departments are going to be able to effectively develop and implement their policies.

We think that they all need support and tools to meet the deadlines on development and implementation, and a lot more clarity is needed.

In terms of implementation, we think that the province should be doing a lot more promotion of the existing services like SMD and MLPD do to enable the implementation.

There isn't really a cookie cutter approach, different people with different forms of disabilities are going to need a lot of different accommodations and we're concerned that a lot of people don't know if and what they're going to be expecting.

We think that this is going to be a movement forward to Manitoba being a lot more inclusive and it's really important and critical that legislation that a

lot of people just aren't aware of.

We think that they should be doing a lot more switching of the dialogue to be a lot more positive rather than punitive. Basically here we're seeing there are a lot of people who are afraid that "oh no I’m going to get sued" or "I'm going to have a giant fine because someone with a wheelchair can't get through my door", no there's not a single mention of physical structures in this. And even if there were, it's all down to reasonable accommodation without undue hardship, people don't know that.

Basically the customer service standard, once you actually look at it, it's very basic, it's keep the aisles clear, it's if someone has a support person let them in. Let their service dog come in with them. Honestly we think that there should be a complete change of how we're looking at it, this is just friendly Manitoba, we're just making it, it's just polite, that's basically what we're dealing with, and we think that they should be changing it, just friendlier Manitoba, you know? You can be selling it like that, basically.

Thank you, I didn't expect that, okay.

And we really want to say it's not scary, it's not a big deal, it's not this giant thing, oh no we're going to get giant fines, it's not. Just be nice to people, and we think that there should be a lot more reduced fear if that messaging were emphasized instead.

When it comes to compliance, there's a concern about public perception. Basically, again going back to that fear, and um, we are slightly concerned that it can be, for especially small businesses with a couple people or very small non-profits, things like that. We think, we're a little worried there's already going to be all this time taken to learn the standard, which isn't that much time, but people are worried about it. They can choose to get a consultant which they can see as "a new cost for us", and basically we want to focus on the positive because otherwise we really don't want these small businesses hating us.

They already had to take this time, effort, and money, and then they can see in the legislation there is an option for punitive fines. We just really think there should be a switch of conception of the whole thing, really.

The legislation is focused on accommodating, accommodation, where it's reasonable up to the point of undue hardship, so it's really not a huge thing, the government isn't going to come into your place and give you fines.

As smaller organizations we feel that they can easily meet the compliance requirements and honestly so can larger places, if you look at it, it's really simple stuff. When it comes to innovation, again, the positive messaging, we think there should be some funding in place to help businesses with implementation. That way they can go and get someone from SMD or MLPD to go into their place and help them create the new standards, new policies.

So making use of the nonprofits, sharing of information among stake holders, we think in the chambers of commerce where a lot of small businesses are a part of, we think they should get together, have a person from SMD or MLPD come in, it's 30 bucks a seat if you're doing it through SMD. Then one person from each business can come in and then all go back to their companies, just go on.

We think that people with lived experiences should tell the stories to show how it's really important and interesting and not a huge giant thing.

Large organizations, moving a little faster because more resources.

Sharing policies and best practices among organizations, smaller organizations maybe going to larger ones to see what they did and maybe get some ideas.

To have the chambers of commerce hold an accessibility workshop for their members across their chambers.

Alright, then we've got the leadership function of DIO and the council, we think there should be a lot more effective communication and public awareness campaigns, we think it would be good to know who the AAC [Accessibility Advisory Council] is comprised of in developing and communicating standards, like what makes a website accessible for example.

Oh, we're done, sorry.

**Lucia:** So we are moving along, I know that we might go overtime but this is such a unique opportunity that we, if you're able to stay a few more minutes, it would be fantastic, past noon. We are going to ask Rocco's table now to please come up and present. And I should say that all of the notes will be gathered and taken back to Theresa's office so she will be analyzing them carefully.

**Table #7: Rocco Scarcella**

So we discussed lack of lead time, organizations pretend to be ignorant of their responsibilities until it's too late to make arrangements. Then they say oops we can't find anybody to support you. Sign language interpreters need to be booked weeks in advance and there's no reason in the majority of cases to wait until the last minute.

For example my school schedule for Winter 2019 is already posted and I guarantee we'll be waiting until the end of December to figure out what we're going to do for disability supports.

We also discussed that many deaf or hard of hearing people don't want to be labeled as disabled. For example I took my high school online just to avoid the disability office at my school. The name Disability Issues Office may deter people just in the name itself.

Instead of there being an open when registered for courses at the university, offering captions, transcripts, interpreters, the university has a large bureaucratic disability office. It's essentially an assigned university parent I have to go to and beg for supports in my classes.

Many people, especially seniors, don't consider themselves disabled with hearing loss and they don't know they can advocate for things like captions.

We discussed the availability of supports, oftentimes things are locked up after 4PM and there may not be supports available for evening classes, this is unnecessary.

Often times something as simple as asking a restaurant or hotel to turn on captions becomes a huge convoluted process. Staff have no idea how to turn on captions.

Who will pay the bill? Interpreters are very expensive, are there grants available for businesses?

Are non-disabled people making decisions on behalf of disabled people? If there's a fire is there a plan to inform the deaf person, assuming there's no strobe lights. Has that plan been discussed with the deaf person?

Some training programs such as SMD's program offer training about disability related issues, however the sense we get out of the training as a business owner is that we're required to do "stuff" but aren't exactly sure what that stuff is.

Having students take notes for you makes professors and other students think the disabled student has an advantage over other students. there needs to be an understanding of why accommodations are in place.

Who do I actually complain to, do I could to the DIO or the Manitoba Human Rights Commission? There's a lack of a bridge between the disability community and the government.

When I personally contacted the DIO I got sent right back to the people that I was complaining about having discriminated against me.

A suggestion is the DIO needs to create a clear process for people and organizations to receive information before going to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

For example, is a transcript a replacement for live captions for a video shown in class?

How long after that video is shown is it reasonable to provide a transcript? Is two weeks after too long?

This can't be left for a six to seven year long Manitoba Human Rights process to get a recommendation.

I personally envision a committee that can offer suggestions before the human rights complaint, their suggestion can be accepted or rejected and the Manitoba human rights process can be used.

Regarding the report on the website, you only know about that if you check on the website and you know about the report, and you can read small print, and you know how to use a computer.

Our suggestion is that there needs to be a media coordinator that not only uses Facebook but also a format for seniors.

Our last suggestion is to possibly make the DIO a Directorate, that way they can make a statement about issues right away.

**Lucia:** Now on to Crystal's table please.

**Table #8: Kystyl Bergen**

Hi everyone, so basically everybody else stole my lines but we're going to go from it and I guess I’m going to keep this clear, concise, and coherent and I’m going to give you 3 things that came out of our discussion just generally.

We started with this conversation about we need more transparency, education, and marketing. if we don’t know what's going on we don't know how to get things leveraged to get businesses to do things we don't know then how are we supposed to do anything?

That brings me to my second point, more engagement. I think the people in this room are very willing to be engaged, willing to be a part of that process, obviously you came out, I think we need to engage people more, we need to use that resource of these people who obviously are willing to be involved in this and use that to our advantage and the government's advantage, I should be specific in that way.

And then third and kind of finally I think, we need to provide more resources, this was a huge discussion in the way we were talking and all the different points. I think that kind of came through with a lot of other peoples' conversations but these resources are incredibly important.

I think there was a point in our table that I will say is, we talked about, it's not necessarily all about creating new resources but rather re-allocating resources like, the government tells us that this is a priority for them so potentially reallocating some of those resources to make that show that this is a priority for them is incredibly important. I think that's kind of our great message.

**Lucia:** Okay, Anupam’s table, is Anupam here? Uh, do we have a mic, for our rapporteur? *You're live, you're live.*

**Table #9: Anupam Sharma**

Sorry, first of all thank you to Lucia for acknowledging our land, obviously I'm first nations and we're on treaty 1 territory but I'd like to make a point that we're all treaty people because we're nation to nation and everybody's a party to those treaties.

So one of the first things we were talking about on the standards was the timeline, everyone said that so I’m not going to repeat that. But being first nations we're also under federal jurisdiction, that was my big question when we got an email about this.

I work under Jordan's Principal in Little Saskatchewan. I am a nurse and the case coordinator and manager, but I was going to point out there's a lot of barriers for us between what the province has and what the feds do and that, we kept repeating that here.

The cost of the implementation for us to provide accessibility, for example for wheelchairs, is very expensive because our capital dollars are always tied up in housing, our buildings aren't wheelchair accessible, we're trying to implement that in the new building we're doing but we don’t even get capital dollars for that. We have to use our rent dollars and we're just a band aid solution for this Jordan's Principal right now, I don’t think they planned this out, they're just send us the money and do something with it. So that's kind of sad when we have that happening to our first nation's children. So we have very low funding like I said because we have to try to provide access to service and it's taken the government 18 years to provide that.

Jordan River Anderson had to die, he didn't even make it home, and I think everyone who's in this field knows that, and for them to take 18 years to try to do something to get us access to services where this accessibility act was, I hope, it works out.

Like I said access to service is also geographical for us, we also face cultural barriers. We face stigma, we also face, one of my workers here said that one of our teachings, humility, a lot of our people don’t want to ask for something because they’re too humble and they’re not going to be forceful or very vocal, like myself, and that could be a big barrier which is cultural.

Another note is a lot of our people are made fun of with disabilities. Lots of disabilities we know aren't visible, like physically, but you know there's lots that are behavioral or cognitive.

Our local center is over an hour from most of our communities and they don’t have resources themselves to provide disability services, everything usually has to happen in Winnipeg. Like travel, I was saying imagine the travel for somebody that's way up North, say in Thompson, that's 9-10 hours if they have to travel to Winnipeg in a wheelchair. I don't know how accessible planes are, but you know, can you imagine somebody going in a wheelchair van and we had to purchase a wheelchair van for some children we are anticipating to come back home once we provide more. Just thinking of that 9 hours just sitting that's extra time to access a service.

We're hoping that our program, when we have it at the community level will build trust and confidence in us to provide services or to access or provide better services for our children. We need more resources.

And with that, under customer services, there's, we have very very, like no access to health professionals. It's a really big issue because we have a hard time recruiting staff to come and work out there, I was saying under [Inaudible 1:14:35] which is responsible for 64 schools, they have service every 2 months, a child develops more than that within 2 months, and yet in Winnipeg School Division there's 42, and you know that's a big gap and these are disabled children that need help. And us we get service maybe every 6 weeks under Jordan's Principal with Sky Center, so it's like, those are big gaps, our children need services.

I was saying it should be mandatory for schools and universities to teach the accessibility act and teach or train us, because when I was in university I never learned about an accessibility act but we should be training our young people now.

We still have a long way to go and like I said back home, trying to be a voice for first nations people, we have lack of services and lack of access.

It always comes down to a money or jurisdictional issue within federal, provincial, and also municipal. It also happens within our cells because what somebody can access on reserve depends where they live on reserve or off reserve.

And another big question I’m going to stress again is how does the provincial legislation affect us on a federal reserve? Can we push the feds to do anything?

And I said this is the first time I’ve seen this kind of forum, when I read it in Jonie's e-mail for Broken Promise campaign, I don't know if we have a chance to be on that accessibility council and there's no information on the DIO, on like I said, the advisory council.

And for that I was wondering if there was representation from us, as First Nations, doesn't matter if on reserve or off reserve they still need our representation. It's very limited and rare to have a reach out from the government towards our first nations.

Improvement and I’ll say the same thing everyone else has said, 23 is very unrealistic to achieve any of the goals or the compliance or the effectiveness of this act.

Thank you.

**Lucia:** Okay, last but not least, thank you for your patience, is Lag's table.

**Table #10: Laksh Khatter**

Okay so, I'm going to go through the points, I'm trying to not skip them because even if they're mentioned again, that I think exemplifies the importance of the point. So, in whole, with regards to the standard development process we found that the consultation was valuable but felt that the feedback loop following the consultation was lacking or that there was a complete absence of. That we would want updates on standards and that the progress has been very slow in implementation.

We just want to acknowledge as a whole that we feel that the resources to develop the standards and implement the legislation is drastically under-resourced, so comparatively in Ontario, there's 150 employees versus 5 employees within our own DIO. So even if you look at the size of Ontario versus Manitoba that proportionately it really doesn't add up, that's the big elephant that really there's not enough staff to implement the legislation.

Again just that the legislation needs to be implemented in a plain language format that's accessible for all and so plain language involving different types of formats, that not everyone has access to email or the ability to use email, that hard copies need to be available in different types of accessible formats.

And that there's various methods of reaching out to stakeholders and not just a one-time public consultation, that if there's consultation meetings that they happen evenings and weekends so those people living with disabilities don’t have to miss employment, so that community members can actively participate in that.

With regards to the customer service standard our group felt that it doesn’t apply to volunteers, that the volunteer sector is left out of that so that that represents a large portion of our, the disability community or nonprofit sector.

There's compliance within the legislation but no framework necessarily to roll out the legislation so how do these standards get reinforced?

There was a real strong presence about not an effective method of communication to ensure that organizations of various types, nonprofits, businesses, private sector, know what they're responsible for.

For example November 1st is the implementation deadline, private sector and nonprofits have not even been notified that they need to implement those standards. Budgets have already been allocated typically as of April 1, agencies, nonprofits, will not have this built into their budget, won't even be able to effectively implement it.

That again it talks about communication, that many businesses, private businesses, small businesses, and smaller organizations don’t even know about the AMA. So it's not even about having the resources to implement it by November 1st, they don’t even have an awareness of it. That the PR [Public Relations] campaign just hasn't been there. That there needs to be an awareness strategy for both organizations and customers, and that there was a remark about communication and awareness that in other sectors such as Liquor and Lotteries, you see billboards all over the place around public awareness and that there needs to be a broad public awareness campaign, such as billboards, TV commercials, to make the community aware that this legislation even exists and that it needs to be implemented.

There were comments about the fact that there's an onus on public and private businesses and non-profit sectors to implement this legislation where the government has also been, has delayed themselves in implementing it, so to set the example and set the tone is a bit difficult when the owners of the legislation, if you will, haven’t even begun to implement it.

And the consultation hasn't been accessible to outside the city, again people have talked about that in a rural setting, that in fact there's going to be a Webinar, as I understand it, but that the Webinar was as a result of advocacy from BFM [Barrier Free Manitoba], and that the Webinar wasn't actually on the table.

The worry is that once advocacy is no longer there that the accessibility of the legislation itself will no longer be there, that that will be deleted, effectively. And that the Webinar isn't necessarily an interactive format in terms of discussing the legislation, and that it's static.

I think that's good that there's no specific consequences for noncompliance, you know this again speaks to the framework or lack thereof, and what are going to be the penalties, how's this going to be implemented, there wasn't even a compliance officer. So how does this exactly happen?

That there was a, I guess, a criticism if you will of the training sessions around education and again not to be redundant but the feeling was that there was a lot of check boxes and not necessarily intentional education training sessions with follow through.

And that standardized training could be, you know, one hour, and that a lot of people who attended the training felt that then they met the compliance around that versus actually implementing the legislation within their organization or business.

And I guess that the DIO, that there was a feeling that the DIO is currently experiencing some feedback from consumers and that, you know, there's a lot of anecdotal information out there that's not necessarily being tracked and recorded and compiled. Our group felt there needs to be a formal mechanism in place for tracking of complaints and review of all that data.

We talked about the fact that the accessibility of the annuals plan by the deputy minister and that our group actually didn’t even know that there was a report by the minister, so we quickly pulled it up and read through it and we found, I think there was 6 requirements or points on it and that we felt that it just wasn’t an accessible format.

*One more minute.*

Good, yup, good.

Okay so to summarize, our three main points that we want, our number one

is communication, number two is compliance and number three is resources.

Within all of those we want firm dedicated leadership identified within those and that we believe accessibility affects everyone and that accessibility is for everyone, and that we feel the legislation has potential but the core purpose of it has not been realized, and we just think that we're just, there's opportunity here, just that the opportunity hasn't yet been realized. And I think that's it.

Thank you.

**Theresa Harvey Pruden:**

Well thank you for your endurance in staying a little bit longer, thank you for all that you've shared today, it's a lot to take in, we have a lot of notes to transcribe and analyze so I know I’ll be busy for sure in the coming weeks. I would like to take a moment to thank all of the volunteer table leaders, note takers, the rapporteurs who came up and shared, and of course I’d like to thank Lucia, our facilitator, who has kept us on task and close to on time.

Thanks to the Viscount Gort for setting everything up and looking after us, Sonny over there at Inland for making sure that our mics work and the video is working and of course Jesse, the world's most amazing typist that I've ever seen in my life, from Word for Word, for providing us with all of the captioning that will make the Webinar so much more useful.

Mostly though I want to thank each of you for coming, for caring, you've told me a lot of important information and as I’ve said I will be scrutinizing all the notes, I made copious notes myself as best I could but it’s so helpful to have all of the stuff that you folks have written down. After today I'll be continuing to meet with organizations and interested others to hear more input, reviewing the progress, or in some cases lack thereof, with respect to the implementation of the act, and I will be required to prepare a report fort the minister of families. My expectation is to have that done by the end of November, then the minister is required to table that report in the legislature so it will become a public document for everyone to see. So once again thank you all again for participating, your input is going to help inform and strengthen the effectiveness of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Enjoy the wonderful sunshine for the rest of the day.

**[12:30PM - Event ends]**