**Are You Able to Effectively Communicate**

Both Title II and Title III of the ADA and Section 504 require that medical care providers provide individuals with disabilities:

* full and equal access to their health care services and facilities; and
* reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to make health care services fully available to individuals with disabilities, unless the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services (i.e. alter the essential nature of the services)

If you have any additional questions, please call the Finger Lakes Independence Center at **607-272-2433** or your regional ADA Center ADA Websitewww.ada.gov

ADA Information Line
800-514-0301 (voice)
800-514-0383 (TTY)

**ACCESSIBLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT and Examination Rooms Should Include**

* Accessible Exam Tables and Chairs
* Accessible lifts that may include Overhead Track Lifts, **Portable Floor Lifts, Trained staff in transfer techniques**
* Accessible Mammography Equipment
* Wheelchair Scales
* **Staff Training (**A critical, but often overlooked component to ensuring success is adequate and ongoing training of medical practitioners and staff. Purchasing accessible medical equipment will not provide access if no one knows how to operate it)
* Accessible Radiologic Equipment

Access To Medical Care ForIndividuals With Disabilities

The Finger Lakes Independence Center

215 Fifth Street

Ithaca, NY 14850

607.272.2433

www.fliconline.org

**Durable Medical Equipment available for short-term loan.**

**with Your Patients Who Have Hearing,**

**Vision, Speech or Cognitive Disabilities?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hearing** | * Face the patient when speaking.
* Use written notes for uncomplicated, short, routine communication.
* Qualified sign language interpreters may be required for more complex situations.
 |
| **Vision** | * Provide print information in large print, Braille, as an audio recording or in electronic format for use with a screen reader.
* With the patient’s permission, provide a qualified reader.
* Ensure that your web site can be used by all patients, including those who are blind and may use computer screen reading technology.
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| **Speech** | * If you have difficulty understanding a patient’s speech, be patient, listen attentively and ask the patient to repeat or write the message.
* Allow more time to communicate with someone who uses a communication board or device.
 |
| **Cognitive** | * With the patient’s permission, provide a reader.
* If the patient is having difficulty with communication, be patient, repeat your message and question the patient to verify their understanding.
* Use diagrams and pictures to improve communication.
 |

**Commonly Asked Questions**

**“Accessibility of doctors' offices, clinics, and other health care providers is essential in providing medical care to people with disabilities. Due to barriers, individuals with disabilities are less likely to get routine preventative medical care than people without disabilities. Accessibility is not only legally required, it is important medically so that minor problems can be detected and treated before turning into major and possibly life-threatening problems.”**

**Are there any tax breaks for making accessibility changes to my medical office?**

* **Yes.** Subject to IRS rules, federal tax credits and deductions are available to private businesses to offset expenses incurred to comply with the ADA. See Form 8836 at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8826.pdf for additional information about the Disabled Access Credit established under Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code. See Publication 535 (Number 7: Barrier Removal) at www.irs.gov/publications/p535/index.html for more information about the tax deduction, established under Section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code. Both the tax credit and deduction may be taken annually

**-Is it OK to examine a patient who uses a wheelchair in the wheelchair, because the patient cannot get onto the exam table independently?**

* **Generally, No**. Examining a patient in their wheelchair usually is less thorough than on the exam table, and does not provide the patient equal medical services. A good option is to have a table that adjusts down to the level of a wheelchair, approximately 17-19 inches from the floor.

**-Can I tell a patient that I cannot treat her because I don't have accessible medical equipment?**

* **Generally, No.** You cannot deny service to a patient whom you would otherwise serve because the person has a disability. In order to do so, you may need to provide an accessible exam table, or a patient lift, or have enough trained staff available who can assist the patient to transfer.

**- Is it OK to tell a patient who has a disability to bring along someone who can help at the exam?**

* **No.** A patient with a disability, just like other individuals, may come to an appointment alone, and the provider must provide reasonable assistance to enable the individual to receive the medical care. This may include helping the patient to undress and dress, get on and off the exam table or other equipment, and lie back and be positioned on the examination table or other equipment. The patient may however, choose to bring a support person along with them.

**-I have an accessible exam table, but if it is in use when a patient with a disability comes in for an appointment, is it OK to make the patient wait for the room to open up, or else use an exam table that is not accessible?**

* **Generally, No.** a patient with a disability should not wait longer than other patients because they are waiting for a particular exam table.If the patient with a disability has made an appointment in advance, the staff should reserve the room with the accessible exam table for that patient's appointment.

-**I don't want to discriminate against patients with disabilities, but I don't want my staff to injure their backs by lifting people who use wheelchairs onto exam tables. If my nurse has a bad back, then she doesn't have to help lift a patient, does she?**

* Staff should be protected from injury, but that doesn't justify refusing to provide equal medical services to individuals with disabilities.The medical provider can protect his or her staff from injury by providing accessible equipment, such as an adjustable exam table and/or a ceiling or floor based patient lift, and training on proper patient handling techniques as necessary to provide equal medical services to a patient with a disability

**If you have any questions about what is being presented in this pamphlet or you have further questions, please contact the Finger Lakes Independence Center 607-272-2433**

**Who Is Affected by Inaccessible Medical Facilities and Services? Number of people in U.S. reporting a:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mobility Disability = 19,937,600 | Hearing Disability = 10,556,600 |
| Vision Disability = 6,636,900 | Cognitive Disability = 14,144,300 |

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey 2011*