



BEST PRACTICES

To make health care accessible to people with disabilities

1. Accessibility and Accommodations

- Ensure physical accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Provide assistive technologies and interpreters for patients with communication disabilities (e.g., sign language interpreters, captioning).
- Conduct accessibility audits of healthcare facilities and services to remove barriers.
- Make medical equipment accessible (e.g., exam tables, diagnostic machines).
- Require accommodation inquiries at every appointment and provide clear policies on accommodations.
- Schedule longer appointments for patients with disabilities to ensure sufficient care.

2. Impact of Bias and Discrimination

- Implement comprehensive training for health-care staff, including medical and nursing students, on disability awareness and communication techniques.
- Train health-care professionals about ADA and Section 504 legal requirements.
- Increase the number of health-care professionals with disabilities to enhance representation.
- Encourage public awareness campaigns on barriers faced by people with disabilities.

3. Patient-Centered and Inclusive Care

- Adopt a patient-centered approach that respects individual needs and preferences.
- Integrate mental health services into primary care for individuals with disabilities.
- Design inclusive health programs for health promotion and disease prevention.
- Involve people with disabilities in decision-making processes about their care and health-care policies.
- Create supportive environments that accommodate sensory and cognitive needs.

4. Coordination and Advocacy

- Facilitate care coordination across different services for patients with complex health needs.
- Support patient advocates to help navigate the health-care system.
- Establish collaborative partnerships with disability advocacy organizations.
- Advocate for policies and legislative reforms that promote the rights of people with disabilities.

5. Technology and Communication

- Ensure accessible information by providing medical forms and instructions in braille, large print, or digital formats compatible with screen readers.
- Integrate accessible health information technologies (e.g., electronic health records).
- Assistive technology should be used to enhance independence and participation in health-care settings.
- Create communication access systems for deaf or blind individuals in health care.

6. Feedback, Research, and Monitoring

- Implement feedback mechanisms for patients with disabilities to report issues and make complaints.
- Encourage research and data collection on health disparities and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
- Monitor health-care facilities for compliance with accessibility regulations, reducing the burden on individuals with disabilities to file formal complaints.
- Establish a secret shopper program to assess accessibility and reduce biases in treatment.

7. Additional Support Services

- Provide accessible transportation services to ensure individuals can attend medical appointments.
- Offer family and caregiver support to recognize their role in caring for individuals with disabilities.
- Include transition services for youth moving from pediatric to adult health-care systems.
- Expand rehabilitation services like physical, occupational, and speech therapy.
- Ensure chronic disease management programs are available to address the unique needs of people with disabilities.

For more information about access to health care for people with disabilities, visit:

[FISAFoundation.org](https://www.FISAFoundation.org)

#Access2HealthCareSWPA