

COVID 19: Making Sure People with Disabilities Get Equal Access to Medical Services and Communications

There are state and national laws to help make sure that people with disabilities can access medical services. Read this fact sheet to make sure your medical provider is following the rules.

ADA and MHRA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) prohibit discrimination based on disabilities. These laws say that public and private hospitals and medical services have to give meaningful access to the services they provide for people with disabilities. This means that people with disabilities must have the same opportunities as others. Medical providers have to also make sure they are communicating in ways that work for the patient and are accessible and easy to understand.

Reasonable Accommodations

These laws also say that hospitals and medical offices need to make “reasonable accommodations” and “reasonable modifications” to rules, policies, and procedures if needed. This means making reasonable changes to make sure people with disabilities have good and fair access to the services.

Auxiliary Aids

Hospitals and medical services also have to provide auxiliary aids and services for communication with people who are deaf, blind, deafBlind, and hard of hearing. Examples of auxiliary aids include:

- American Sign Language interpreters for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- captioning
- accessible websites

COVID-19 Pandemic

These ADA and MHRA rules still apply during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though medical providers have limited their services because of the pandemic, they still have to make sure that

The Minnesota Disability Law Center

people with disabilities have fair and understandable access to their services and communications. These rules apply for in-person treatment and remote treatment.

Need Help?

If you were denied fair access to services or the auxiliary aids you need for effective communication for your medical services, contact us. We are open and may be able to help you.

Call the Minnesota Disability Law Center: 1-800-292-4150.

For more information on disability rights and other topics go to:

www.LawHelpMN.org

June 2020