

Steps to Improve Access to Health Care Practices¹

Federal and state laws require health care professionals to ensure their services are accessible to clients with disabilities as well as their family members and caregivers. A range of no-cost and affordable solutions exists to assist health care providers in making facilities accessible and offering disability-competent care. Practical examples include but are not limited to:

1. Working together with qualified persons with disabilities in response to requests for reasonable modification of policies, procedures, and practices.
2. Eliminating obstacles from parking lot to building entrances and exits (e.g., snow, ice, leaves, debris along the path of travel).
3. Providing ease of door access (e.g., adjust automatic door closers to allow sufficient time to enter and exit, use a pressure gauge to ensure that less than five pounds of pressure is necessary to open any door).
4. Creating a facility access policy for service animals.
5. Providing disability etiquette training for all administrative and service personnel.
6. Training front-desk personnel to appropriately assist persons with disabilities in completing any intake paperwork or required forms.
7. Furnishing facility and practice information in alternate formats (e.g., large print, assistive technology for sensory impairments, other electronic and information technology).
8. Identifying local sign language interpreting agencies (e.g., make accurate contact information available to front-desk personnel, schedule an interpreter before the appointment).
9. Ensuring wheelchair accessibility and periodic staff training for safe transfer techniques (e.g., to and from examining tables, clutter-free examining rooms, wheelchair accessible scales for weighing, at least one examining room large enough to accommodate individuals with mobility devices).

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