

Access & Communication Guide for Health Programs in Florida -Survey

Chronic Disease

Nationally, approximately half (117 million) of US adults have at least one chronic illness¹.

Approximately 1 in 4 adults has Multiple Chronic Conditions¹.

Chronic disease account for five of the top 10 causes of disability in the U.S., including the number one cause of disability, arthritis².

The estimated prevalence of disability in Florida is 21.2%; higher than the national average of 19.6%³.

Chronic diseases disproportionately affect persons with disabilities making accessible health care and health promotion particularly critical for this group⁴.

People with disabilities have an average of 2.47 chronic conditions compared to people without disabilities who only have an average of 1.25 chronic conditions.

People with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to experience limited access to care due to cost, transportation difficulties, and physical access barriers⁵.

Reaching Persons with Disability

Programs can create inclusive marketing materials in order to market their programs to people with disability.

- **Tip:** Make your website accessible.
 - Use large print (16-18 pt.), sans serif font (Arial, Tahoma, etc.), and avoid italics⁶.
 - Use colors with effective contrasts (black against a light color)⁶.
- **Tip:** Use symbols to let persons with disability know that the program is accessible (Figure 1).
 - Programs can download Disability Access Symbols at:
https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/tools_resources/downloadable-disability-access-symbols
- **Tip:** Use photos that include people with disability.

- Here is a link to UF's inclusive Image Library:
<http://fodh.php.ufl.edu/training-resources/inclusive-image-library-photo-release/>

Health programs can provide inclusive marketing materials to organizations that target persons with disability.

- **Tip:** Join disability list serves⁶.
- **Tip:** Visit disability organizations and educate them about the services you provide⁶.

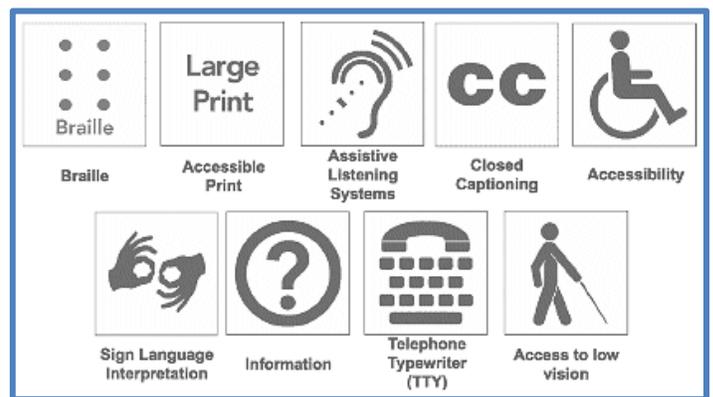


Figure 1: Disability Access Symbols

Accessible Programs

An individual with a disability must have access to the same health programs as someone without a disability. Reasonable accommodations can ensure equal access to programs. The benefits of accessible programs include increased attendance, increased wellness opportunities for persons with disability, more community visibility, and better public perception⁶.

Removal of Physical Barriers

People with disability cannot access programs when doorways and entrances are too narrow, waiting rooms are too small or cramped with furniture, buildings have stairs and no ramps or elevators, or bathrooms have insufficient turning space for a wheelchair. Existing facilities are required to remove physical barriers where readily achievable. That means when it is accomplished without unnecessary financial or administrative burden⁵.

Access & Communication Guide for Health Programs in Florida- Survey

Programs are responsible for altering or modifying rooms to ensure access by persons with different physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. In most cases, this can be done by moving furniture or using appropriate signage.

- **Tip:** Change door handles from knobs to levers.
- **Tip:** Add grab bars and full length mirrors in restrooms.
- **Tip:** Make sure paths are clear and at least 36 inches wide.
- **Tip:** Remove or secure rugs.
- **Tip:** Create non-skid surfaces by purchasing a non-slip clear coating from noskidding.com

Provision of Auxiliary Aids and Services

Programs may need to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to achieve effective communication with individuals with sensory impairments (i.e. people who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, or have low vision)⁵.

The provision and cost of auxiliary aids and services is the responsibility of the organization, not the patient. Also, programs cannot rely on the client's friends or family members to interpret or facilitate communication.

Communication may need to be facilitated by qualified sign language interpreters, video relay interpreting, passing notes, assistive listening devices, large print, Braille, e-mail, text messaging, screen readers, or other audio devices for communication of information.

- **Tip:** Provide program materials in alternate formats including large print, Braille, audio tape formats, or CD format.
- **Tip:** Find out if your facility has hearing loop capabilities by looking for this symbol.



(More Information on the Resources page.)

Programmatic Policies, Practices, and Procedures

Programs are responsible for implementing disability competence training for staff to ensure that individuals with disabilities do not experience discrimination. Program staff should develop procedures for evaluating compliance with accessibility standards.

- **Tip:** Make sure staff knows accessible routes to the facility⁶.
- **Tip:** Train staff on accommodations that are offered and how to use them⁶.
- **Tip:** Train staff on how to use phone relay services (TTY)⁶.

Programs can provide accessible transportation to clients. If transportation is offered it must be on an accessible transportation route and have an accessible path of travel from the pick-up or drop-off sites.

One way to determine a client's needs is by asking for accommodation needs on the registration sheet, during the appointment call or upon walk in (Figure 2).

Sample registration questions

I will need the following accommodations in order to participate:

- American Sign Language Interpreter
- Note taker
- Open captioning
- Large print
- Braille
- Audio recording
- Wheelchair access
- Assistive listening device
- Disk (format):
- Special diet

Figure 2: Sample Questions

Access & Communication Guide for Health Programs in Florida- Survey

Resources

Independent Living Centers

<http://www.floridacils.org/>

Centers on Aging

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/arc.php>

Faith Based Organizations -

Churches:

<http://www.usachurches.org/search/fl/>

Mosques:

<http://mosquelist.blogspot.com/2010/08/mosques-in-florida-usa.html>

Synagogues:

http://www.floridajewish.com/florida_jewish_synagogue_s.php

Social Media Groups

<http://www.facebook.com>

<http://www.linkedin.com>

<http://www.instagram.com>

Support Groups

<http://www.caregiver.com/regionalresources/states/fl/support/index.htm>

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

<http://www.fddc.org/>

Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

<http://www.fccdhh.org/>

Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology

<http://www.faast.org/>

Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.

<http://www.ftri.org/FloridaRelay>

Hearing Loop –

Looping turns hearing aids into direct receivers of a sound system by transmitting a signal from a microphone or sound system through an installed wire that encompasses the listening area.

Looping enables individuals with a manual telecoil (t-coil) equipped hearing device to have sound signals transmitted wirelessly to their hearing aids, thereby improving their ability to hear by eliminating background noise and echo.

To find out if your building has hearing loop capabilities or to find out how to install hearing loop capabilities, please visit:

<http://thehearingloopgroup.com/hearing-looped-venues-in-florida.html>

http://www.hearingloss.org/sites/default/files/docs/Hearing_Loop_Directory.pdf

References

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2. Prevalence and Most Common Causes of Disability Among Adults --- United States, 2005. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, May 1, 2009/58(16); 421-426. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5816a2.htm#tab2>
3. CDC Prevalence and Trends Data: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/>
4. Office of the Surgeon General. (2005). The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Improve the Health and Wellness of Persons with Disabilities. Washington DC: US Department of Health and Human Services. Web. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44667/>
5. New York State Department of Health. (2013) Reminder to Facilities of Their Obligation to Provide Accessible Services to People with Disabilities. http://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/hospital_administrator/letters/2013/2013-07-31_provide_accessible_services_to_persons_with_disabilities.htm
6. Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs. (2013). Successfully Accessible: Access on a Shoestring & Knowing What You Need. http://www.florida-arts.org/documents/accessibility/Access_on_a_Shoestring_slides.pdf