

## Effective Communication for Medical Services for People with Disabilities During COVID-19

### ABOUT US

The Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC), a division of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, is Minnesota’s Protection and Advocacy System for people with disabilities.

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MDLC has created this factsheet about common issues and how to address them. Our office is available to help.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) prohibit discrimination based on disabilities. These laws require public and private hospitals and medical services to ensure that people with disabilities have meaningful access to the services they provide and that they ensure effective communication in connection with their services.

Among other things, the ADA and MHRA require hospitals and medical offices to make “reasonable accommodations” and “reasonable modifications” to rules, policies, and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have meaningful and equal access to the services that they offer. The laws also require hospitals and medical services to ensure effective communication by providing auxiliary aids and services for communication with people who are deaf, blind, deafBlind, and hard of hearing. Examples of auxiliary aids include providing American Sign Language interpreters for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, captioning, and accessible websites.

The requirements of the ADA and MHRA continue to apply during the COVID-19 pandemic. While medical providers have limited their services across the board due to the pandemic, they are still required to ensure that people with disabilities have meaningful access to treatment and procedures that are still being provided and that they have effective communication for their services. These requirements apply whether treatment is being provided in-person or remotely.

### CONTACT US

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**If you have been denied the auxiliary aids and services you need for effective communication for your medical services, please contact us. We are open and may be available to assist you.**