



# Safeguard Against Disability Discrimination During COVID-19

Including individuals with disabilities in the COVID-19 response to ensure equitable care



## THINK EQUITABLE CARE - TAKE ACTION!

- **Inform key medical personnel** immediately that individuals with disabilities have equal rights to COVID-19 testing and treatment.
- **Make equitable decisions** to ensure that allocation of COVID-19 resources, supplies, and care are not based on inaccurate assumptions about life with a disability.
- **Provide accommodations** to make sure all individuals can access COVID-19 testing and treatment. This requirement includes accommodations for behavioral, intellectual, or physical disabilities that may impact someone's ability to comply during testing and treatment.



## KNOW THE BEST PRACTICES - TAKE ACTION!

- **When communicating with individuals with disabilities:**
  - Talk directly to them.
  - Ask permission before speaking with their caregivers, if possible.
  - Ask the caregiver for assistance if you need help communicating with a patient.
  - Use plain language to tell individuals and caregivers about COVID-19 test results and anticipated procedures.
  - Keep in mind that you may have difficulty understanding the patient, however, in most cases they understand you.
- **Make these accommodations:**
  - Allow a caregiver to go with a patient to ensure adequate support for decision-making and treatment.
  - Provide ramps and rooms with enough access for a wheelchair.
  - Provide qualified interpreter services for the deaf or hard of hearing.
  - Use prompts, such as picture cues, for those with limited use of verbal communication.
  - Provide the time needed for individuals to speak, respond, and understand.

**THINK EQUITABLE!**

This information is based on guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights.  
For more information, visit [HHS.gov/ocr](https://www.hhs.gov/ocr) and [bit.ly/2WXEscv](https://bit.ly/2WXEscv)