

PHYSICIANS and DEAF/HARD OF HEARING PATIENTS



Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§12182, 12183, (ADA) provides people with disabilities with the rights to equal access to public accommodations.

Title III covers a wide range of places of public accommodation, including private health care providers, such as doctors' offices, private mental health services, dental offices, and other private health care providers. All of these public accommodations are required to provide auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective communication with deaf and hard of hearing people.

- ❖ There are ~646,000 deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians
- ❖ Lip-reading **AT BEST** is about 30% accurate. This leaves A LOT of room for mistakes, which could be deadly!!
- ❖ American Sign Language is a true language. It has its own grammar and syntax which are different from English and do not have a written form. Thus:
 - Written notes are **NOT** effective means of communication for native ASL users.
 - Individuals who know some sign language are **NOT** effective interpreters.
- ❖ With native ASL users, an interpreter should be present in all situations where the information to be exchanged requires effective communication, such as taking a medical history, explaining tests, procedures and diagnoses, planning treatment, providing discharge instructions and scheduling follow up care.
- ❖ The Kentucky Licensure law requires that all interpreters hold a valid Interpreter License. A listing of licensed interpreters can be found on the Kentucky Board of Interpreters web page. <http://finance.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/E064026C-2253-41F5-B12F-71E0794FCA9B/0/InterpreterDirectory.pdf>
- ❖ Few licensed interpreters are available in some areas so often it is necessary to hire interpreters from outside the immediate area.
- ❖ Physicians should note that there are tax credits available for expenses incurred in the course of accommodating patients with disabilities. For more information on this program you can visit: <http://www.ada.gov/taxpack.htm>
- ❖ Any questions related to provision of appropriate accommodations for deaf and hard of hearing individuals can be directed to:

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

632 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601
800-372-2907 (V/T)

kcdhh@kcdhh.ky.gov

www.kcdhh.ky.gov



General Communication Tips for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The following tips will allow a person with hearing loss to effectively use what hearing they have and use visual cues to receive as much information as possible. People with hearing loss often rely on visual cues for information. Some people have difficulty knowing where a sound is coming from. Others hear sounds, but may not be able to recognize the words that were spoken. All of these tips are easy to do, but may require a conscious effort at first.

- Avoid standing in front of a light source when speaking.
- Make sure you have the person's attention before speaking.
- Stand a normal distance from the person.
- Do not cover your mouth or have anything in your mouth when you are speaking.
- Look directly at the person you are speaking to and maintain eye contact.
- Speak clearly, at a normal pace.
- Repeat the statement, then re-phrase if the person is unable to hear the words spoken.
- Use shorter, simpler sentences if necessary.
- Do not shout.
- Use gesture, facial expression and body language to assist with communication.
- Be patient and take time to communicate.
- Try writing down a couple words or a phrase to clarify if communication is difficult.
- Remember that just because a person can hear your voice, does not mean they can understand your words.
- When writing back and forth, keep your word choices simple and sentences short. If the person understands you well and uses more complex sentence and vocabulary, you may do the same. Take your cue from the deaf person.
- When using an interpreter, speak directly to the deaf person. When the interpreter voices what the deaf person signs, look at the deaf person, not the interpreter. Avoid saying... "Tell him..."