Health Care Access for Blind and Visually Impaired People

MAP to Access

When working with blind or visually impaired people:

- Always verbally identify yourself when you approach, introduce yourself, and explain what you are doing.

- Verbally let patients know when you leave.

- Ask how they would like to be assisted. They know best about their own safety, health, and needs. They will explain how you can help.

- Train staff to be welcoming, respectful, and to describe the office, including doors, steps, or ramps. Staff should ask how they can assist people to where they need to go.

- Service dogs are legally allowed in medical facilities. Do not pet or distract a guide dog. Respect the owner's instructions regarding her dog.

- All written information must be made accessible in the patient's preferred format. Some people want it on disk; others prefer large print or Braille.

- Involve blind or visually impaired patients in their care. Before you begin the examination or treatment or administer medication, verbally explain what you are going to do and how you are going to do it.

- Indicate where blind or visually impaired people may leave their clothing and belongings. Do not move these without explaining where they will be.

- If a blind or low-vision person needs to sign a document, ask how best to assist. Some people will ask you to use a ruler or your index finger to indicate where to sign.

Learn More:

- **Providing Information in Alternative Formats**
  www.cdihp.org/briefs/brief6a-alt-formats.html

- **Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired**
  www.lighthouse-sf.org

- **BrailleWorks Solutions for the Healthcare Industry**
  www.brailleworks.com/Products/IndustrySolutions/HealthCare.aspx

- **How Usable Are Your Health Care Services and Facilities?**
  www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh/pdfs/rbhealthcare.pdf

- **The Barrier Free Healthcare Initiative**
  thebarrierfreehealthcareinitiative.org

- **Speak to an ADA Specialist**
  Voice 800-514-0301 TTY 800-514-0383

- **Access to Medical Care DVDs**
  www.wid.org/amc

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