



Your Right to Medical Care

July 23, 2020

The law protects people with disabilities from discrimination. This does not change during an emergency, like an earthquake, wildfire, or a pandemic such as COVID-19.

This fact was reiterated by the State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disability Services in a memo dated April 24, 2020, reminding healthcare providers and payers that “rationing care based on a person's disability status is unlawful under federal law.”

People with disabilities have the right to:

- Not be treated differently because of their disability.
- Not be denied treatment because of their disability.
- Good communication and clear information.
- Make decisions about their own medical care, and to ask for help if they feel they need it.
- Reasonable disability accommodations.

Medical care cannot be denied, limited, or delayed because of an individual's disability.

- Hospitals and clinics cannot deny you needed medical treatment or make you wait at the end of the line for medical care because of your disability.
- Treatment decisions must be based on whether you can benefit from the medical treatment.
- Healthcare providers may not consider stereotypes or assumptions about your disability, quality of life, or life expectancy when providing treatment or distributing medical equipment.

People with disabilities may need reasonable accommodations in receiving medical treatment.

Healthcare providers cannot consider whether your disability will require more resources or additional support (like a wheelchair or communication device) when recommending medical treatment.

Healthcare providers must make reasonable accommodations to allow patients with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from treatment. Examples include reasonable changes to policies & procedures or allowing a support person to help you communicate.

If you have questions or think you have been discriminated against,
contact the Disability Law Center of Alaska.

Provided by the **Disability Law Center of Alaska**
www.dlcak.org Toll Free, Statewide (800) 478-1234

All laws are subject to change by legislation and by court decisions.

The information is not intended to be legal advice. It is a Public Education resource. Readers should use this guide for information, and then ask questions about their own individual needs.