

Accessible and Alternative Healthcare Delivery

Lunch and Learn Topical Working Series

The Arc of PA Initiative to Address
COVID-19 Health Disparities
Among People with Disabilities



December 12, 2023



Welcome

The Arc of PA Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among People with Disabilities

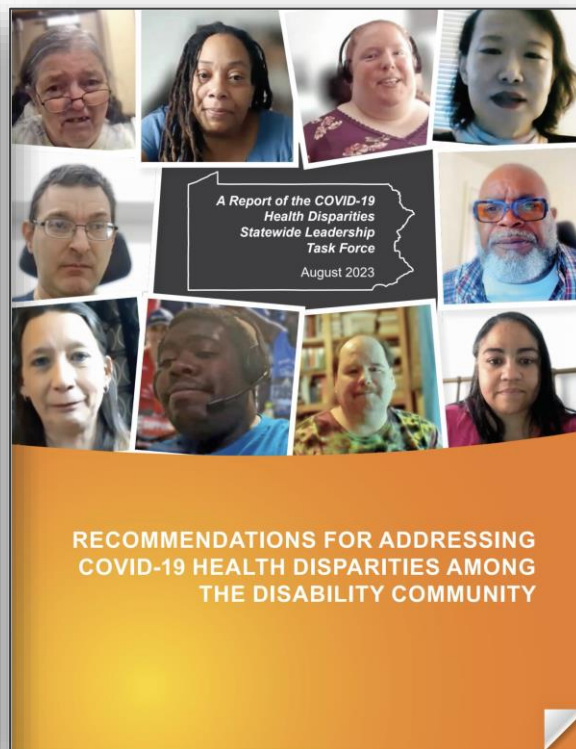
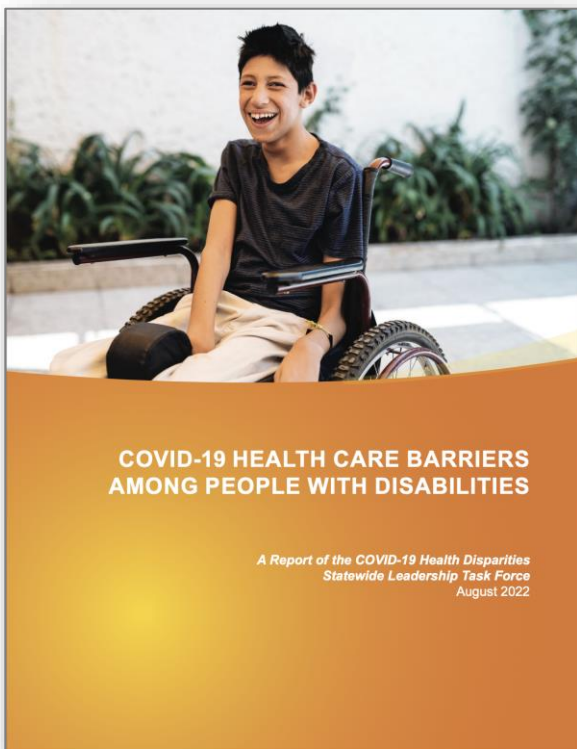
Emma Nolan, Manager of Government Relations and Health Initiatives, The Arc of Pennsylvania





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Pennsylvania

Calling for disability-inclusive health care



- COVID-19 Health Disparities Task Force
- Regional Community Work Groups
- Over 400 individuals with disabilities, family members, caretakers, health professionals across diverse ethnic, racial, rural populations
- The Arc of PA and local chapters
- Funded by the PA Department of Health



Today's focus: Our recommendations for...

- **Accessible health care:** Increase accessibility features of health care facilities to ensure full and equal access.
- **Alternative health care:** Expand community-based healthcare, including telehealth services and mobile clinics.
- **Accessible health care information** (earlier Lunch and Learn session)

Today's Agenda:

- The Health Disparity and Recommendation
- Practice Panel



The Health Disparity and Our Recommendation



[ARC of PA Barriers Report 8-9-22.pdf](#)



COVID-19 HEALTH CARE BARRIERS AMONG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

*A Report by the COVID-19 Health Disparities
Statewide Leadership Task Force*

June 2022

2021-2022 Listening Tour: COVID-19 Health Care Strengths and Barriers



Diversity by role

- Mostly persons with lived experience of disability, caretakers and family members
- Also, professionals in the fields of disability and health care

Diversity by disability – intentional outreach across physical, intellectual developmental, behavioral, or emotional, sensory impairment, and complex medical disabilities

Diversity by race – intentional outreach to Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)

Diversity by location – rural, urban, suburban; intentional outreach to rural settings



Social Determinants of Health

Education Access and Quality

- Systemic educational barriers
- Technology barriers

Economic Stability

- Financial security barriers
- Social supports



Health Care Access and Quality

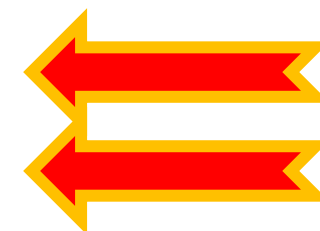
- Systemic health care barriers
- Mental and physical health issues
- Vaccination and testing barriers
- Staffing barriers
- Technology barriers

Neighborhood and Built Environment

- Local conditions
- Transportation barriers
- Accessibility

Social and Community Context

- Information barriers
- Cultural, linguistic barriers
- Communication





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“This whole thing made it difficult for persons with disabilities to be self-sufficient; it’s like climbing a ladder – the further up you go, away from the familiar, the scarier it is and the more alone you feel.”





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“You let them know your needs ahead of time, then the staff themselves don’t know how to meet those needs”

- Kelly Barrett, Person with a Physical Disability living in Erie County.





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JEFFREY DENNISTON
PHD, CPS

“Telehealth worked for me. I know it’s difficult to help you make an egg over the phone, but you can talk about how your day went.”

- Jeffrey Denniston, PHD, CPS, a person with a mental health condition in Butler County



Recommendation: Increase accessibility features of health care facilities and medical equipment to ensure full and equal access for people with disabilities.



Examples:

- Height adjustable exam tables
- Weight scales that accommodate wheelchairs
- Accessible check-in kiosks
- Lift equipment to transfer patients
- Sign language interpreters
- Sensory-friendly waiting rooms (quiet rooms, adjustable lighting, pull down shades)



Recommendation: Expand the Community-Based Health Care Program in the Department of Health to include:



- (a) Expansion and protection of accessible telehealth services; and
- (b) Development of accessible mobile health care clinics.

Benefits:

- Increased accessibility and flexibility in healthcare delivery
- Eliminates the need for transportation and facility barriers
- Allows person to remain in a familiar place and comfortable surroundings



Resources and Practices

Cathy Roccia-Meier, Arc of PA



HOW TO IMPROVE PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY AT YOUR HEALTH CARE FACILITY

People with disabilities often face major barriers getting the health care services they need. Improving physical access to health care services is essential to achieving health equity. Designed for health care providers, staff, and administrators in outpatient settings, this resource highlights some of the physical barriers people may face, discusses actions you can take to assess the accessibility of your facility, and describes ways to design and carry out programs and policies that deliver high-quality, patient-centered care. The steps discussed here are not substitutes for compliance with federal, state, or local regulations but can provide a starting place for assessment. Consider speaking with experts and directly to patients with disabilities for additional insight on other barriers and needs specific to your practice.

HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES AMONG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

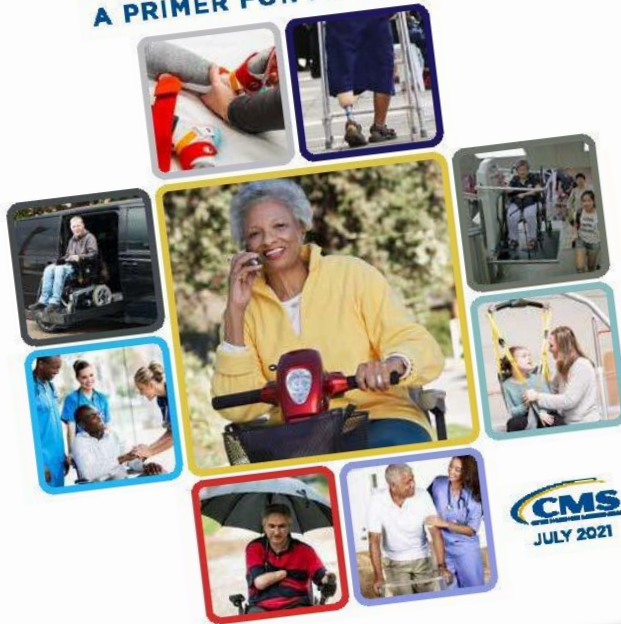
Adults with disabilities are almost twice as likely as other adults to report unmet health care needs related to the accessibility of a doctor's office or clinic.¹ Research shows that, compared to people without disabilities, people with disabilities are:

- Less likely to receive comprehensive preventive care.²
- Less likely to have an annual dental visit.³
- Less likely to receive diagnostic imaging.⁴
- Less likely to receive recommended cancer screenings.^{4,5}

Progress has been made to improve access in medical buildings and offices, but patients continue to face barriers inside physician suites.²⁸ A survey of U.S. physicians across seven specialties found that among those seeing patients with significant mobility limitations, only 40 percent always or usually used accessible exam tables or chairs.⁹ Inaccessible exam tables, weight scales, infusion chairs, mammography machines, and radiology equipment can affect treatment, personal safety, and quality of care.^{29,30} Even when an office has accessible equipment, patients with disabilities can still experience disparities due to lack of awareness about needed accommodations, office rules and procedures, and physician bias.^{12,31}

MODERNIZING HEALTH CARE TO IMPROVE PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

A PRIMER FOR PROVIDERS



CMS
JULY 2021

Kepro



Rehearsal Guide Dentist Visits

Preparing men and women with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) to successfully complete a dental exam.

AUTISTIC



Physical

Processing

Emotional

Sensory

Predictability

Acceptance

Communication

Empathy



National Association of the Deaf

Search the Site...

Search

Accessibility requirements for remote interpreting in telehealth video communications:

Federal law mandates that remote interpreting (VRI) connections must include:^[3]

- Real-time, full-motion video and audio over a dedicated high-speed, wide-bandwidth video connection or wireless connection that delivers high-quality video images that do not produce lags, choppy, blurry, or grainy images, or irregular pauses in communication;
- A sharply delineated image that is large enough to display the interpreter's face, arms, hands, and fingers, and the participating individual's face, arms, hands, and fingers, regardless of his or her body position;
- A clear, audible transmission of voices; and
- Adequate training to users of the technology and other involved individuals so that they may quickly and efficiently set up and operate the VRI.

To achieve this federal mandate, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Deaf... [Interpreting Guidelines for Health Care](#) provides technical and operational... state where the service is provided, the interpreters are approved... licensure requirements for interpreters.^[9]



Building Accessible Telehealth for Patients with Disabilities from the Ground Up

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF
TELEHEALTH
RESOURCE CENTERS

NCTRC Telehealth Hack Series

Building Accessible Telehealth for Patients with Disabilities from the Ground Up

Talking to Families: Telehealth for Children with Special Needs

A tip sheet on involving the whole family in telehealth care for children with complex needs

STEP 1: Prepare for your telehealth visit before the appointment starts:

- ▶ Be familiar with each family's communication needs
- ▶ Confirm the family has internet access and a computer, smartphone, or tablet to attend the virtual visit
- ▶ Ask the family if they will need assistive technology to communicate during a telehealth appointment
- ▶ Book a slightly longer telehealth appointment to account for delays or pauses in communication with a child

STEP 2: Speak directly to the child during the telehealth appointment

- ▶ Ensure the child has an important role in their own health care:
- ▶ Greet the child by name and have everyone present introduce themselves
- ▶ Speak directly to the child during the virtual visit, even if the child is non-verbal
- ▶ Save time for the child to ask questions or share something that is important to them
- ▶ Involve the child in the decision making process whenever possible
- ▶ Recognize that some children may be distracted or unable to sit for an entire appointment

STEP 3: Use child-friendly communication techniques

- ▶ Keep the child engaged and comfortable so they can be more involved in their care
- ▶ Take time to celebrate the child's successes and milestones
- ▶ Use props during the telehealth visit, such as toy animals, dolls, or colorful flashcards
- ▶ Encourage children to draw a picture while you chat with the parents or guardians and then share at the end of the telehealth appointment

STEP 4: Make sure the family has a clear plan for follow-up care

- ▶ Ongoing partnerships between doctors and families give children the best chance to thrive:
- ▶ Follow up with any prescriptions, lab or imaging orders, or referrals
- ▶ Book a follow-up appointment, if necessary
- ▶ Schedule an in-person visit if the child was unable to participate in a telehealth appointment
- ▶ Ask the family if they have suggestions for improvement during the next telehealth visit

Visit [Telehealth.HHS.gov](https://telehealth.hhs.gov)



Telehealth & Disability: Recommendations for Providers

www.TelehealthResourceCenter.org
SEPTEMBER 2021

What is telehealth and how does it apply to patients with disabilities?

The National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers defines telehealth as "a collection of means or methods for enhancing health care, public health, and health education delivery and support using telecommunication technologies."¹ Telehealth has been shown to improve access to healthcare services for many vulnerable populations. However, significant challenges exist for patients with disabilities when it comes to accessing both in-person and remote healthcare. In particular, barriers to communication access prevent patients with disabilities from utilizing telehealth to the fullest extent.²

Definition of Disability³

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), an individual with a disability is defined as:

- 1) a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major activities; or
- 2) a person who has a history or record of such an impairment; or
- 3) a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment

Legal Obligations⁴

Under Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any services, programs, or activities of the covered entity (e.g. healthcare providers). In the context of healthcare, nondiscrimination on the basis of disability means equal access to available health care services, whether those services are provided in-person or via telehealth.

Additionally, there may be other requirements under state laws that go beyond what is in the Rehabilitation Act. Whatever accommodations are required when providing services to a person to meet these obligations will likely also need to be addressed when utilizing telehealth. The policies may not be clear or where the use of technology had not been considered. Requirements for having certain accommodations for physical access such as wheelchair ramps and other requirements are still required if a practice is solely providing telehealth services via telehealth may not have a clear answer in law or regulations at this time.

1) Center for Connected Health Policy. What is Telehealth? <https://www.cchpc.org/about/about-telehealth>

2) Annaswamy, T.M., Vendano-Gutierrez, M., & Frieden, I. (2020). Telemedicine barriers and challenges for persons with disabilities: COVID-19 and beyond. Disability and Health Journal, 13(4), 100973. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2020.100973>

3) A Guide to Disability Rights Laws. (2020). <https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>

4) Disability Rights Section. Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice. (2020). Accessibility in Telehealth. (PowerPoint Slides). National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers. <https://telehealthresourcecenter.org/20-26-2020-telehealth-hack-slides-final-v4/>



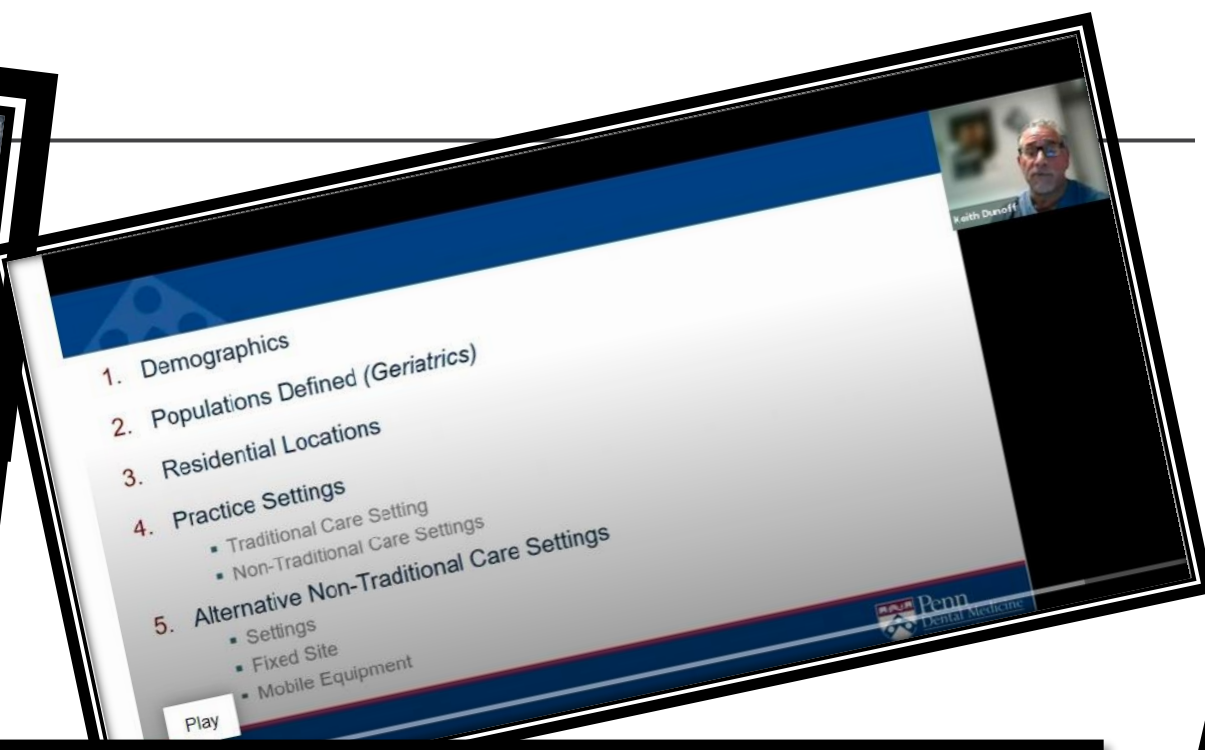
Rural Evaluation Brief

April 2018

<http://walshcenter.norc.org>

The Walsh Center
for Rural Health Analysis
BANK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OHIO

Promising Practices for Increasing Access to




1. Demographics
2. Populations Defined (Geriatrics)
3. Residential Locations
4. Practice Settings
 - Traditional Care Setting
 - Non-Traditional Care Settings
5. Alternative Non-Traditional Care Settings
 - Settings
 - Fixed Site
 - Mobile Equipment

Play

PAH Penn Dental Medicine

Keith Desoff

Models to Overcome Transportation Barriers



Models such as mobile clinics, telehealth, school and workplace-based health programs, and home visiting programs are designed to help populations overcome transportation barriers in rural communities. These models focus on reducing the need to travel and increasing access to health care services and community supports.

Mobile Clinics. Mobile clinics are self-contained vans, recreational vehicles, or other vehicles that have been repurposed to provide clinical services in rural areas to populations that may lack access to specific health care services. Examples of the services provided by rural mobile clinics include dental services, diabetes screenings, immunizations, and vision services, among others. Mobile clinics regularly visit schools, community sites, and other locations to provide these services, and they help people who would otherwise have to travel long distances to see a provider.

"[Transportation] is a lifeline... [being able to travel] back and forth to appointments and treatments is a matter of life or death – it is definitely a matter of quality of life."

- Rural transportation program leader

Telehealth. Telehealth is "the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support and promote long-dis-

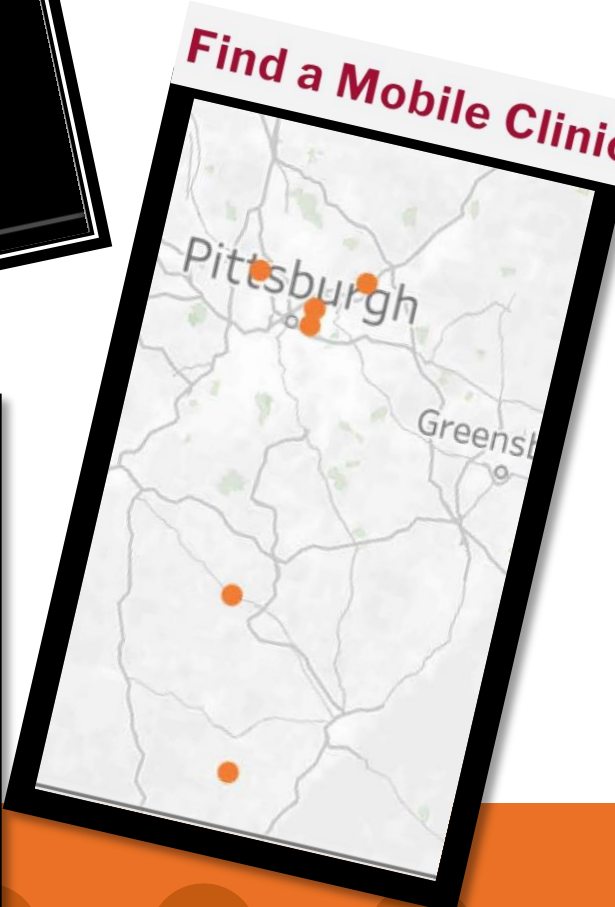


MOBILE REACH - RESOURCES AND EDUCATION FOR AUTISM AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

[> LEARN MORE](#)

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Find a Mobile Clinic



Pittsburgh

Greensburg



One Idea Per Line: A Guide to Making Easy Read Resources



Advancing Care Excellence for
Persons With Disabilities

[\(/education/teaching-resources/professional-development-programteaching-resourcesace-all/ace-d\)](#)

Communicating with People with Disabilities

Communicating with People with Disabilities©

[Download PDF version \(/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/professional-development-programs/ace-series/getting-started-communication-with-pwd.pdf?sfvrsn=8d11a80d_3\)](#)

Failure of health care providers to communicate effectively and appropriately with people with disabilities is a major barrier to delivery of quality health care for people with disabilities. The information in this document identifies general issues for communication with all people with disabilities followed by issues that may be specific to individuals with a

<https://www.nln.org/education/teaching-resources/professional-development-programteaching-resourcesace-all/ace-d/additional-resources/communi...> 1/7



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Today's Practice Panel



StationMD

Dr. Maulik Trivedi, MD, FACEP, Chief Strategy Officer, StationMD

Penn Dental Medicines' Personalized Care Suite for Persons with Disabilities (PCARE)

Dr. Alicia Risner-Bauman, DDS, FADPD, DABSCD, Associate Director, Penn Care Center for Persons with Disabilities



Question and Answer





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**LUNCH
AND LEARN**

December 19, 2023
12:00-1:30PM

Disability-Inclusive
Healthcare Systems





2024
**Disability Health
Action Summit**
**Sheraton Hotel
Harrisburg, PA**
March 6, 2024



SAVE THE DATE

**2024
Health Equity
Summit**

Harrisburg University
Harrisburg, PA
April 4 & 5, 2024





Thank you!

