



Access to Reproductive Health Care for Parents with Disabilities

Robyn Powell

What disability rights laws protect people with disabilities when they are getting reproductive health care?

There are two laws that protect people with disabilities when they are getting reproductive health care. These laws are the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- The ADA has 2 parts. One part covers organizations and programs run by states and local governments. The other covers businesses that are open to everyone.
- Section 504 covers organizations and businesses that get money from the federal government, like hospitals that take Medicaid and Medicare.

What is reproductive health care?

Reproductive health care includes health care received before, during, and after having a baby.

It includes care before having a baby. It also includes help having babies if you are having a hard time getting pregnant. Family planning services like birth control are also reproductive health care.

Reproductive health care also includes care for infections that affect the reproductive system. These kinds of care include Pap smear tests, breast exams, and treatment for illnesses you can get after having sex without protection.

Who gets protections under the ADA and Section 504?

The ADA and Section 504 say that people who have a hard time learning, moving, or thinking can have a

Protections for Parents with Disabilities Under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

ADA

State and Local Governments



Public Schools



Courts



Lawyers' Offices



Sports Stadiums



Public Transportation



Public Hospitals



Restaurants



Private Hospitals & Clinics

ADA

Businesses Open to Everyone

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Agencies and Organizations That Get Money from the U.S. Government



Hospitals



Universities



Child Welfare Agencies

disability. It also says that people who are sick for a long time can have a disability. To get protections under the ADA and Section 504, their disabilities must make it hard for them to do daily life tasks.

You are also protected if you had one of these problems in the past. You are also protected if people think you have a disability. Some of these disabilities include intellectual disabilities, blindness, Deafness, heart disease and diabetes.

Some daily life tasks include taking care of yourself, working, reading, learning, walking, hearing, and seeing.

What Disability Means Under the ADA and Section 504

- Problems with thinking, moving, or learning, or being sick for a long time.
- History of disability
- Being seen as disabled



You are also protected if you had one of these problems in the past. For example, doctors and hospitals can't discriminate against someone who had cancer in the past but doesn't have it anymore. They don't have a disability, but they are being treated like they have a disability because of their history.

You are also protected if people think you have a disability. For example, reproductive care providers can't discriminate against someone who has burns on their face. The burns aren't a disability if they don't make it hard to do things in their daily life. But they are still being treated differently.

Rights Under the ADA and Section 504



No Unfair Treatment



Being Included



Having the Same Chances



Making Changes



Understandable Communication



Accessibility and Usability

What are my rights as a parent or future parent with a disability?

- Hospitals, clinics, and doctors aren't allowed to turn you away just because you have a disability.
- You are supposed to have an equal chance to get the programs and services you need if you meet the organization's guidelines.
- You can have changes made to programs and services so you can get the help you need, like getting on an exam table.
- You have the right to be communicated with in ways you can understand. Some of these ways include captioning, sign language, and videophone chats.
- Most hospitals, doctors' offices, and clinics should be fully accessible to people with disabilities, and all new buildings must be completely accessible.

What are examples of disability discrimination against parents or prospective parents with disabilities?

- Hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices that wheelchair users can't get in and out of.
- Not making communication accessible. This includes Braille, captioning, and sign language. Communication should be accessible at all times, including during exams, labor and delivery, and hospital stays.
- Not making changes, like helping people around the exam room.
- Not letting a person with a disability bring their service animal inside.
- Not helping someone because of their disability.
- Inaccessible exam tables.

What should I do if I feel I've been treated unfairly?

If you feel you have been treated unfairly because of a disability, contact a lawyer. Every state has a Protection and Advocacy organization. Protection and Advocacy organizations protect disabled people's rights. They give free legal help to people with disabilities. Parents with disabilities can also complain to the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Some states can also help if people with disabilities are treated unfairly.

There are strict deadlines for sending in complaints.
It's important to act fast to protect your rights!

Getting Help When You Are Being Discriminated Against



Contact a Lawyer



Contact Your State's
Protection and Advocacy
Organization



Contact the U.S. Department of
Justice or the U.S. Department
of Health and Human Services