

Know Your Rights

Language Access in Health and Human Services

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) wants to make sure everyone in America can get the health care and human services they need. This includes people who don't speak English well and people with disabilities. HHS believes that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect.

The HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces laws that protect you against discrimination in health and human services based on your race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, and disability. HHS OCR also enforces laws that protect the privacy and security of your medical records.

You cannot be denied health care coverage or treatment because of your race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability in most health care services and programs.

Language Help for Everyone – Important Rights

- You cannot be left out, denied benefits, or discriminated against by any health care provider, such as doctors, nurses, hospitals, clinics, or social services.
- You have the right to receive health care in-person or remotely, including telehealth, websites, and mobile apps, free from discrimination.
- Your health care providers need to make sure they can communicate with you in a way that you can understand them when you need their care or services.
- If you or someone with you doesn't speak English well or can't read, write, speak, or understand English well, you can get help with in-language services (like interpretation or translation) for free from your health care provider.
- You are not required to bring your own interpreter, pay for an interpreter, or rely on a child or family member to interpret for you.
- If you have a disability, you can get tools and services, called auxiliary aids and services, to help you understand information, for free, from your health care provider.

Where Can You Find More Information?

For help with language access, visit: www.hhs.gov/LanguageAccess.

For help with civil rights and health information privacy, visit: www.hhs.gov/ocr.

How Do You File a Complaint?

If you think you or someone else has been treated unfairly or discriminated against because of race, color, where they come from, sex, age, or disability, or if you think your or someone's health information was not kept private, you can tell the HHS OCR.

- Someone can file a complaint for you, such as a family member, advocacy organization, friend, or co-worker.
- HHS OCR can provide information in different formats (like Braille or large print) and offer free services to help you, like a relay service or in-language assistance.

Filing a Complaint or Contacting HHS OCR:

Website: www.hhs.gov/ocr | Email: OCRMail@hhs.gov | Phone: 1-800-368-1019 | TDD: 1-800-537-7697