

## **New Requirements for Accessible Medical Diagnostic Equipment**

As of July 8, 2024, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has in place new requirements for the accessibility of medical diagnostic equipment (MDE) used by public and private entities that receive funding from HHS (recipients). The requirements apply to doctors, dentists, hospitals, clinics, emergency rooms, and other health care providers that use medical diagnostic equipment in providing their services. Medical diagnostic equipment includes, but is not limited to, examination tables, examination chairs for eye or dental exams and procedures, weight scales, mammography equipment, and x-ray machines. Entities that participate in Medicare, Medicaid, or other grant or funding programs from HHS are covered by these new requirements.

HHS issued these new requirements because people with disabilities continue to face barriers in getting medical care due to inaccessible medical equipment. Barriers include exam tables or chairs with heights that cannot be adjusted, weight scales that do not allow the use of wheelchairs, and mammography machines that require a person to stand.

HHS adopted [the existing standards for accessible MDE](#) put in place by the U.S. Access Board. The standards specify what is required for medical equipment to be accessible. For example, the standards require transfer surfaces to be adjustable in height from 17 inches to 25 inches and to be compatible with portable patient lifts.

### **Highlights of the New Requirements**

\*Each recipient that uses exam tables and weight scales has two years (until July 8, 2026) to have in place at least one accessible exam table and one accessible weight scale.

\*If a recipient buys, acquires, or rents MDE after July 8, 2024, the equipment must meet the standards for accessibility until it obtains the required number of pieces of equipment. HHS requires that, for most recipients, 10% (or at least one) of its MDE must eventually be accessible. For recipients that specialize in treating conditions that affect mobility, like rehabilitation centers and physical therapy providers, the requirement is 20%.

\*Even if recipients are not acquiring new MDE, they cannot deny health care services to a patient with a disability that they would otherwise provide because they lack accessible MDE. HHS requires that the recipient's federally funded program or activity be generally accessible. Methods for achieving program accessibility include doctors seeing patients at an accessible hospital where they have staff privileges or serving a patient with a disability at another, accessible location of a recipient's multiple facility practice.

\*Recipients must have qualified staff who can operate the accessible MDE. One way to do this is to provide staff training on the use of the accessible features of MDE.

\*Recipients are required to assist patients with disabilities in transferring to the accessible equipment and positioning them on the equipment.

\*Recipients must ensure that accessible MDE is placed in its facility so that it can be readily used by patients with disabilities.

\*For additional information on the requirements of Section 504, see OCR's [Section 504 web page](#).