

DELIVERING QUALITY
HEALTHCARE FOR
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY

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Print: 9781948057455
Epub: 9781948057462
Kindle: 9781948057486

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DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

- There are over 61 million people in the US with disability, making it the largest minority group in the country.
- One in every 4 people has or will have a disability at some time in their lives.
- Disability occurs in all age groups, gender, race and ethnic groups, socio-economic groups, and countries around the world. It occurs more often in women than men.
- Although life expectancy is shorter for people with disability than those without, many people with disability have a normal or near-normal life span.
- People with disability make major contributions to their families, occupations, and society as a whole; make decisions about their lives and health; and have good quality of life.
- People with disability seek and receive healthcare in every type of setting (e.g., maternity care settings, intensive care, outpatient and inpatient settings, community-based facilities).
- Although some healthcare providers specialize in providing care to individuals with disabilities, *all* healthcare providers need to provide high quality care to this population.
- Lack of knowledge on the part of healthcare professionals and negative attitudes are major barriers to quality healthcare for those with disability.
- Many healthcare professionals, including nurses, have negative attitudes toward individuals with disability.
- Inclusion of people with disabilities as part of a teaching team can counteract healthcare providers' negative views about them.
- It is important to ask people with disability about how their disability affects them in order to provide quality healthcare.
- Healthcare professionals across all disciplines lack adequate information about providing quality care for individuals with disability.

- Healthcare providers can improve patient education by considering health literacy and optimal communication approaches for individuals with disability.
- Providing accommodations to patients with disability (accessible sites, interpreters, assistance in transferring from chair to exam table) is a responsibility of the healthcare provider and not the patient.
- People with disability are as interested in sexuality, intimacy, pregnancy, and childbearing as those without disability.
- Even if someone with a disability is unable to communicate verbally, that individual has a right to self-determination and to make health-related decisions.
- Over one-third of people with serious mental health disability do not receive treatment for their disability.
- Multiple international and national agencies and organizations have called for inclusion of disability in all health professions education.
- Many barriers to healthcare for persons with disability can be addressed with a minimum of expense.
- People with disability are at increased risk for violence and abuse, with those with specific types of disability at higher risk than others.
- The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 was the first comprehensive civil rights law designed to prevent discrimination of people with disability.
- Advances in technology enable many people with disability to see, hear, communicate, work, and go to school.
- Disability does *not* mean poor health; people with disability can be very healthy.
- Mortality from chronic illnesses is high in people with disability because of lack of screening and other preventive healthcare and delayed diagnosis.
- People with disability, especially those who have had a disability for many years, are the experts on their own disability and should be recognized and treated as the experts.
- Exposure to excessive noise is the most common cause of hearing loss disability and the most preventable cause of it.
- Most children who are deaf at birth are born to hearing parents.
- Shouting is a common but ineffective way healthcare professionals try to communicate with individuals who have hearing or vision loss.
- Increasing the number of individuals with disability in healthcare professions is an effective way to improve attitudes of healthcare professionals toward individuals with disability and to confront barriers to care.
- Although safety concerns are often used as justification for excluding individuals with disability from admission to nursing programs, no data support increased safety risks.
- Women with disability have been refused obstetrical care; many providers believe that women with disability are (or perhaps should be) asexual and should not have children.

**Learn about these issues in detail
and more in *Delivering Quality
Healthcare for People with Disability***



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