



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Office of the Governor

COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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RESOLUTION 2022-6

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (citing the 2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System), 111,809 adults in Alaska have a disability, which equals 21% or approximately 1 in 5 adults in Alaska; and,

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, published a fact sheet (“Healthcare for Alaskans with Disabilities”) stating that Alaskans with disabilities experience health disparities caused in part by physical barriers to care, communication differences or insensitivity to communication differences, a lack of comfort by health care providers, a lack of availability of providers, and a focus on the patient’s disability rather than the whole person; and,

WHEREAS, the Healthcare for Alaskans with Disabilities fact sheet goes on to state that people with disabilities have limited access to healthcare providers due to the lack of providers within a community, the limited number of providers willing to accept public insurance, waitlists, providers with limited disability-specific knowledge, and staff/provider turnover; and,

WHEREAS, the Healthcare for Alaskans with Disabilities fact sheet states that people with disabilities experience delays in the healthcare system that negatively impact care due to difficulties navigating the healthcare system, and problems associated with information technology and communication; and,


WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, published another fact sheet (“Healthcare Providers and Alaskans with Disabilities”) that also points out that successful visits require 40% more time for patients with disabilities; providers who asked about accommodations are more likely to provide them, but only 47.8% ask at scheduling or intake; only 22.3% of providers have alternate formats for health-related forms or materials; 48.4% of providers reported no disability-related training within the last 5 years; and that providers could improve coordination of patient care by including people with disabilities in decisions related to accessibility and soliciting feedback from disabled patient.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights calls on all healthcare providers operating within the State of Alaska to provide greater access to communication methods for patients with disabilities, which may require accommodations for deaf and hearing-impaired patients, and accounting for additional time in meeting with a disabled patient who will have a communication barrier. The Commission

further calls on healthcare providers to proactively discuss with patients whether the patient requires a communication accommodation and solicit feedback from disabled patients on how to better serve people with disabilities.

Copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Alaska State Medical Association and the directors of all major healthcare institutions in Alaska.

ADOPTED at Sitka, Alaska, this 17th day of October, 2022

DocuSigned by:

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Zackary Gottshall
Chairperson
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution
2022-6 is a true and accurate copy of the
language adopted by the Commission on
October 17, 2022.



Angela Park
Secretary
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights