



Hard of Hearing

Self-Advocacy for Hard of Hearing

Self-advocacy is your key to gaining communication access in all environments. It begins with understanding your hearing loss, knowing your rights and the accommodations you need, and notifying your provider of how best to communicate with you.

Know your rights:

- The US. Department of Health & Human Services and the U.S. Department of Justice has provided [Guidance on Nondiscrimination in Telehealth](#) and is “committed to ensuring that health care providers who use telehealth, including telehealth that is available 24/7, do so in a nondiscriminatory manner”.
- Communication access is a human right, is to be provided and paid for by your medical provider and is covered under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#), [504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), and [Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#).

Know what accommodations you need:

- An accommodation is a change in the usual way of communicating to provide communication access to the patient and/or support person, who has a hearing loss.
- Before you contact your provider to schedule an appointment, be aware of the accommodation(s) you will need. If you need help learning about possible accommodations, try looking at the [General Types of Accommodations for Hard of Hearing People](#).

Request accommodations from the provider:

- When possible, **request accommodations at least two weeks in advance (or as soon as possible)** and follow up a few days before the appointment to confirm.
- Follow up in writing: Check out the [Accommodation Request Letter](#).
- Make sure to note the name, job title, phone number and/or email of the person who will handle the accommodation request. This may be needed if there is an issue with your request.
- You will need to ask for your accommodations with each provider every time you have an appointment.
- Consider sharing with your provider the following [Communication Guidelines](#) and [How to Talk on the Phone to a Person who is Hard of Hearing](#).

Ask the Provider:

- How you can reach a live person rather than an automated phone line when you need to schedule an appointment, or if you get disconnected during your telehealth appointment.
- To send you a portal message, text, or email as an appointment reminder if that is more effective for you than a phone call.

To learn more about your rights during telehealth appointments, and how to advocate for your communication access, please contact the [NC DSDHH Regional Center](#) near you.

This document is not legal advice and is intended as informational guidance only.



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This document was developed through a collaborative process involving the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers.

