

Hearing Impaired Patient Hospital

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York reviewed the general principles that apply to a healthcare facility's obligations toward individuals with disabilities.

If a healthcare facility offers a service to persons without disabilities it must make reasonable accommodation to the needs of disabled persons so that the service is open and available to them also.

A person with a disability is entitled to meaningful access to services a hospital offers to the non-disabled.

A hospital must provide accommodation to the needs of a qualified individual with a disability.

A hearing-impaired person is entitled to the means to effective communication, if effective communication is the purpose of a service provided to non-hearing impaired persons.

Therefore, a hospital has to provide a sign-language interpreter for a deaf father taking a Lamaze class.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT,
NEW YORK, 1999.

The court put no stock in the hospital's argument it did not have to provide an interpreter for a deaf parent taking a Lamaze class. The court saw no other realistic way the man could achieve effective communication of information, which was the ultimate intended benefit of the program. **Bravin v. Mount Sinai Medical Center**, 58 F. Supp. 2d 269 (S.D.N.Y., 1999).