

## **Accessibility Basics for Medical Practices**

Below is a list of accessibility features to look for in your medical practice. This list will give you a basic understanding of your practice's capacity to provide care to patients with disabilities.

We recommend that you walk through your facility, review this list, and determine whether you are able to check off each item. If you are not able to check off an item, that is an indication that accessibility needs improvement.

- |   | Yes                      |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Staff receives training on interacting and communicating with people with disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Printed materials are available in alternate formats (ex. large print, electronic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The practice has a service animal policy   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Accessible parking spaces are available  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. People can access all areas of the facility without climbing stairs                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. There is available counter space that is no higher than 3 feet                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. An accessible restroom is available  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. All public spaces and pathways are clear of clutter or obstructions                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. There is at least one wheelchair accessible scale and one height adjustable exam table | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. People with disabilities are included in emergency evacuation plans                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**The next page contains explanations of each item on this list. If you still have questions, please contact the North Carolina Office on Disability and Health for more information.**

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## **Explanation of Accessibility Basics for Medical Practices**

1. Training topics can include disability etiquette, understanding how to provide sign language interpreters, providing instruction to patients with intellectual disabilities and using the NC RELAY phone service.
2. High-use forms can be created in alternate formats such as large print, which is a minimum 16 or 18 point font. This is an easy alternate format to create. Other formats can include Braille or electronic format. Staff may read smaller pieces of information to patients who are blind.
3. A service animal may only be a specially trained dog or miniature horse. All staff should be aware that a service animal is not a pet and is allowed on the premises. When determining if an animal is a service animal, staff may only inquire as to whether or not it is a service animal and what specific tasks it performs. NCODH can provide further information on service animals.
4. Van accessible spaces are at least 16 feet wide and car-accessible spaces are at least 13 feet wide. The space measurement is most important. Spaces should be marked with a sign that has the accessibility symbol, a notice of a \$250.00 maximum penalty and NC G.S.20-37.6.
5. Be sure patients can find the elevator. Where steps are present, there must be a ramp.
6. The reception desk should have a portion that is no higher than 3 feet. If this is not available, provide another space to write on. Clipboards may work for some individuals. Spaces such as waiting areas, exam rooms, and patient consultation rooms should have a 30in x 48in space for people using a scooter or wheelchair or for a service animal.
7. Accessible restrooms have features such as a 32in wide doorway, a 5ft x 5ft area around the toilet, covered pipes under the sink (to prevent scalding,) fixtures that can be operated with a closed fist and dispensers that are no higher than 48in above the floor.
8. There should be a clear pathway of at least 3 feet wide to all public areas. Doors that are especially heavy to open should have their closers adjusted. Exact door weights can be measured during a full accessibility review. Automatic doors are not required but are the easiest to use. Doorways should be a minimum 32in wide.
9. Patients with disabilities must have equal access to examinations. The practice must provide a means to weigh patients who cannot stand on a scale. Asking a person their weight is not appropriate. Height adjustable exam tables provide the safest way to examine patients who have difficulty getting up on a regular table. Using a lift or having properly trained staff transfer patients are other ways to provide access to examination tables but they are not as safe.
10. Include the evacuation of persons with disabilities in evacuation plans. Be sure there is an accessible way to exit every floor of the building. Ensure there is an evacuation chair on site to get people with mobility disabilities to a lower floor.

Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design: [www.ada.gov/2010ADASTANDARDS\\_index.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTANDARDS_index.htm)

North Carolina General Statute 20-37.6: Parking privileges for handicapped drivers and passengers.  
[www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter\\_20/GS\\_20-37.6.html](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_20/GS_20-37.6.html)