

# Optimizing Dental Care for Individuals with Mobility Disabilities



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# Who are we?

- Kayce Sexton
- Kathryn Hopkins
- Gwen Casper
  - Brian Samuels
- Shelly

# Shelly

- Introduction
- Experience with Dental Care
- Experience with LSC
- What she wants to see changed with dental care access for individuals with IDD



U.S. Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division  
Disability Rights Section

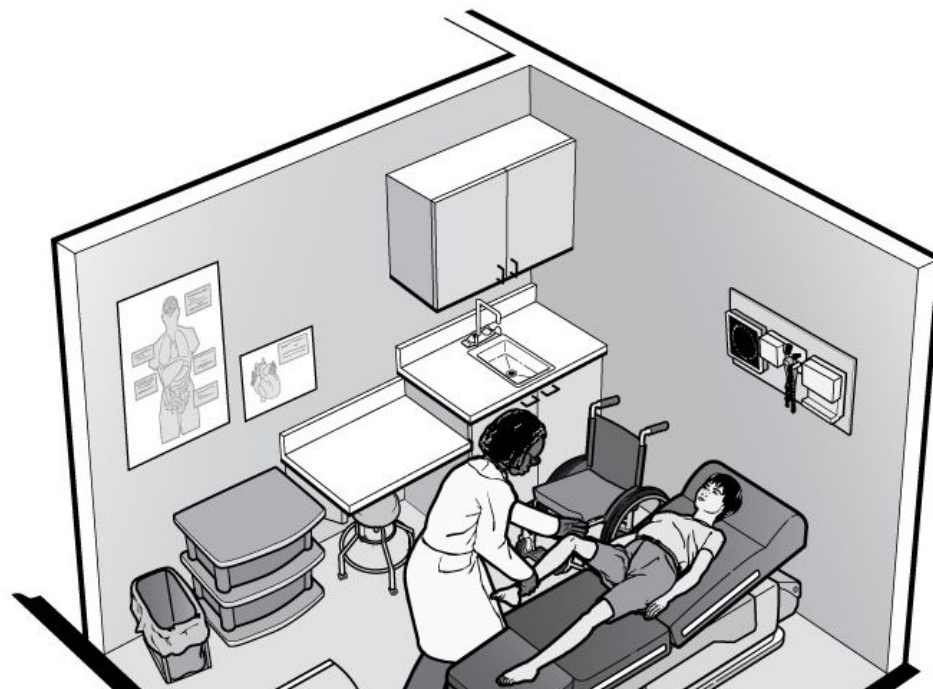
U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights



[https://www.ada.gov/medicare\\_mobility\\_ta/medicare\\_ta.htm](https://www.ada.gov/medicare_mobility_ta/medicare_ta.htm)

Americans with Disabilities Act

## Access To Medical Care For Individuals With Mobility Disabilities



**Q** Is it OK to examine a patient who uses a wheelchair in the wheelchair, because the patient cannot get onto the exam table independently?

**Generally no.** Examining a patient in their wheelchair usually is less thorough than on the exam table, and does not provide the patient equal medical services. There are several ways to make the exam table accessible to a person using a wheelchair. A good option is to have a table that adjusts down to the level of a wheelchair, approximately 17-19 inches from the floor. (See Part 4 of this publication for a more in-depth discussion of accessible exam tables.) What is important is that a person with a disability receives equal medical services to those received by a person without a disability. If the examination does not require that a person lie down (for example, an examination of the face), then the exam table is not important to the medical care and the patient may remain seated.

**Q** Is it OK to tell a patient who has a disability to bring along someone who can help at the exam?

**No.** If a patient chooses to bring along a friend or family member to the appointment, they may. However, a patient with a disability, just like other individuals, may come to an appointment alone, and the provider must provide reasonable assistance to enable the individual to receive the medical care. This assistance may include helping the patient to undress and dress, get on and off the exam table or other equipment, and lie back and be positioned on the examination table or other equipment. Once on the exam table, some patients may need a staff person to stay with them to help maintain balance and positioning. The provider should ask the patient if he or she needs any assistance and, if so, what is the best way to help.



**Q** I don't want to discriminate against patients with disabilities, but I don't want my staff to injure their backs by lifting people who use wheelchairs onto exam tables. If my nurse has a bad back, then she doesn't have to help lift a patient, does she?

**Staff should be protected from injury, but that doesn't justify refusing to provide equal medical services to individuals with disabilities.** The medical provider can protect his or her staff from injury by providing accessible equipment, such as an adjustable exam table and/or a ceiling or floor based patient lift, and training on proper patient handling techniques as necessary to provide equal medical services to a patient with a disability. (See Part 4 for more information on this equipment.)

# Survey Results

- Survey Overview
- We created a survey for dental professionals with questions that would help us understand what offices are currently doing to make their offices accessible to people with disabilities.
- We received 40 responses from these states: Kentucky (majority), Tennessee, Michigan, and Florida



# Survey Questions

1. Does your office see geriatric or special needs patients?

-100% Yes

2. Does your office see patients that have wheelchairs?

-97.5% Yes

-2.5% No

# Survey Questions

3. Has your dental office had an experience where someone needed help transferring from a wheelchair to the dental chair? If yes, explain the experience.

-87.5% Yes

-12.5% No

4. Does your dental office have any resources to accommodate patients with positioning in the dental chair? Ex: pillows, wedges, etc. If yes, what are they?

-90% Yes

-10% No

# Survey Questions

5. Has your office had training on how to help with the transferring of patients from a wheelchair to a dental chair? If yes, who facilitated the training?

-22.5% Yes

-77.5% No

6. Would your office be interested in being trained on how to transfer patients from a wheelchair to the dental chair?

-67% Yes

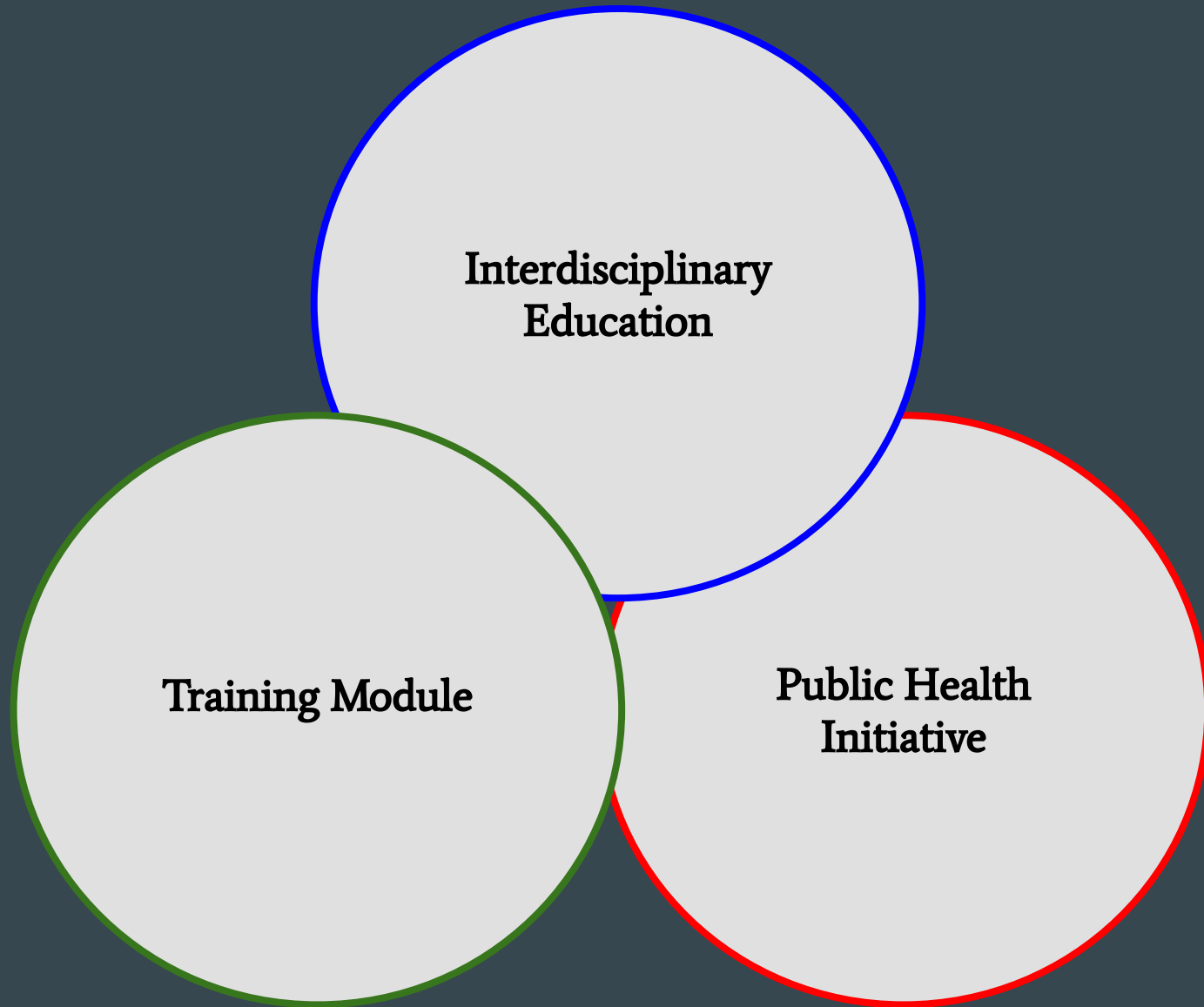
-33% No

**Q** What should I do if my staff do not know how to help a person with a disability transfer or know what the ADA requires my office to do? Also, I am unsure how to examine someone with spasticity or paralysis.

**To provide medical services in an accessible manner, the medical provider and staff will likely need to receive training.** This training will need to address how to operate the accessible equipment, how to assist with transfers and positioning of individuals with disabilities, and how not to discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Local or national disability organizations may be able to provide training for your staff. This document and other technical assistance materials found on the ADA Website ([www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)) can be used in conjunction with live training to train medical staff. The U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line is another resource. Anyone can call the Information Line at 800-514-0301 (voice) or 800-514-0383 (TTY) to speak with an ADA Specialist to get answers to questions about the ADA. Additionally, when preparing to assist a patient with a disability, it is always best to ask the patient if assistance is needed and if so, what is the best way to help. If the provider is unsure of how to handle something, it is absolutely OK to ask the patient what works best.

**Q** Are there any tax breaks for making accessibility changes to my medical office?

**Yes.** Subject to IRS rules, federal tax credits and deductions are available to private businesses to offset expenses incurred to comply with the ADA. See Form 8826 at [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8826.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8826.pdf) for additional information about the Disabled Access Credit established under Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code. See Publication 535 (Number 7: Barrier Removal) at [www.irs.gov/publications/p535/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p535/index.html) for more information about the tax deduction, established under Section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code. Both the tax credit and deduction may be taken annually.



**Interdisciplinary  
Education**

**Training Module**

**Public Health  
Initiative**

***Action Plan***



# Training Modules

- Module for physical therapists willing to act as instructors
- Module for dental team members to complete training
- 3 fold benefits

# Public Health Initiative

- Patient testimonials
- Review of ADA access rights
- Resources on self advocacy
- Compile list of accessible compliant offices

# Interdisciplinary Education

- Structured hands on workshops
- Facilitate collaboration of dental and physical therapy programs

**Thank you !**

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