



CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Office of the Secretary

December 23, 2022

Dear Disability Coalition,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with us and for your passion to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in the reproductive health space.

To begin, our Administration and Agency are committed to doing everything that we can to engage with those in the disability community to ensure that all individuals have equal access to health care in California, including, but not limited to, reproductive health care and access to abortion care services.

After reading your letter, we would like to share our next steps that will improve access to abortion.ca.gov, reproductive health services, and health care at large for individuals with disabilities. This includes the below action items, but we invite continued dialogue:

- Commit to working with subject matter experts to improve accessibility of abortion.ca.gov. We can encourage, but not require, the same level of accessibility the State strives for of our external partners to whom we link to on abortion.ca.gov. We currently include a disclaimer on the website to let individuals know of this potential limitation but will engage with our partners to encourage improved accessibility. The website states: "This State of California's website accepts no responsibility for the content or accessibility of the external websites or external documents linked to on this website."
- Commit to developing a few captioned videos with sign language to provide general information regarding abortion.ca.gov.
- Commit to adding content to website to address rights and resources for persons with disabilities to be accompanied by support person, to use supported-decision making, and when in a conservatorship.
- Commit to having the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) issue an All Plan Letter reminding health plans of their responsibility to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to reproductive health care services, including a reminder about accessibility pursuant to [APL 22-027](#) and about non-discrimination towards individuals with disabilities pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act. Once the All Plan Letter is released, we will plan to share this information on abortion.ca.gov to ensure individuals are aware of their rights and protections in this space.

- Commit to working with disability partners to ensure individuals with disabilities are aware of the Department of Managed Health Care's (DMHC) Help Center and their ability to help individuals navigate issues with health plans.
- Commit to convening listening sessions to better understand the barriers and to raise awareness about individuals with disabilities and their access to reproductive health care. This could begin with a listening session between the coalition organizations and members of the state's reproductive health care team, but could also expand to include health care providers and individuals with disabilities to better improve our health care system.

Although we recognize that the fight to increase accessibility for those with disabilities is never fully complete, we are committed to continuously strive to bring California closer to that end goal. Additionally, as a committed reproductive freedom state, we are devoted to ensuring access to abortion and reproductive health services for every individual who may need it. We look forward to quickly addressing these action items and continuing the fight for reproductive freedom for all.

Sincerely,



Mark Ghaly, MD, MPH
Secretary
Health and Human Services Agency

cc: Members of all disability coalition organizations via ccenter@dredf.org:

- Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Planning and Advisory Council
- Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA)
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
- Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network (AWN)
- Center for Independent Living (CIL)
- Central Coast Center for Independent Living (CCCIL)
- Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL)
- Disability Action Center (DAC)
- Disability Community Resource Center (DCRC)
- Disability Rights California (DRC)
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
- Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC)

- FREED Aging and Disability Resource Connection Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco (ILRC-SF)
- National Association of the Deaf (NAD)
- Rolling Start, Inc.
- Senior Disability Action (SDA)
- Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SVILC)
- Service Center for Independent Life (SCIL)
- Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS-IL)
- Stanford Medicine Alliance for Disability Inclusion and Equity (SMADIE)
- Tri-County Independent Living (TCIL)
- U.S. Alliance of Women, Nonbinary Persons, and Other Gender Minorities with Disabilities
- Women Enabled International (WEI)