

Problem Statement: Health Care Providers



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ISSUE STATEMENT

People with intellectual disabilities are at increased risk for poor health outcomes and health disparities.¹⁻³ The lack of health care provider training on disability has been highlighted in recent literature as a key, modifiable determinant of the health disparities experienced by people with intellectual disabilities.¹⁻⁵

Despite national calls for didactic and clinical interventions aimed at improving health care provider competency in treating people with intellectual disabilities^{1, 6}, most health care providers receive little training during medical school in the health care of patients with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, mainstream clinical guidelines do not address the unique concerns of patients with intellectual disabilities. As a result, patients with intellectual disabilities are not included in mainstream health care delivery organizations and practices.

THE VISION

A time when each health care provider is trained to care for people with intellectual disabilities and does their part to ensure equitable access to quality health care for patients with intellectual disabilities.

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THE SOLUTION

Health care providers can promote inclusive health, the *inclusion of people intellectual disabilities in mainstream health services, training programs, and research*, by improving their competency in caring for patients with intellectual disabilities through education and advocacy:

- Advocate for the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in health care delivery in your field
- Complete continuing education on disability and health topics, including communication strategies
- Obtain experience with patients with intellectual disabilities, both in clinical and non-clinical settings
- Advocate for curriculum changes in academic training programs to include training on serving patients with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities throughout the lifespan
- Partner with disability organizations to learn more about the respectful inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in health care services and in training programs
- Encourage professional associations to adopt resolutions or policy statements endorsing the importance of addressing health disparities experienced by children and adults with intellectual disabilities
- Advocate for the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities as a population of focus within your professional organization
- Advocate for the medically underserved population designation for people with intellectual disabilities
- Advocate for appropriate reimbursement to reflect the additional time and skills required to provide quality health care to people with intellectual disabilities
- Talk to other health care providers about the importance of inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities

References

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