

New Rule Issued by USHHS -- Nondiscrimination, Language Assistance

On May 13, 2016, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a final rule to advance health equity and reduce health care disparities. Under the rule, individuals are protected from discrimination in health care on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and sex, including discrimination based on pregnancy, gender identity and sex stereotyping.

“A central goal of the Affordable Care Act is to help all Americans access quality, affordable health care. The announcement is a key step toward realizing equity within our health care system and reaffirms this Administration's commitment to giving every American access to the health care they deserve,” said HHS Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell.

The final rule also includes important protections for **individuals with disabilities** and enhances **language assistance for people with limited English proficiency** by:

- Requiring covered entities to make electronic information and newly constructed or altered facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities and to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities.
- Requiring covered entities to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to individuals with limited English proficiency. Covered entities are also encouraged to develop language access plans.