

South Carolina Interagency Office of Disability and Health

Increased Access to Primary Care for People with Disabilities

Public Health Issue

Approximately 20% of South Carolina residents live with a disability. Studies show that people with disabilities are more likely than people without disabilities to struggle financially, lack adequate transportation and live in rural areas, making access to primary care difficult. Because of limitations in physical and/or equipment access, they are less likely than people without disabilities to receive basic health screenings. Without access to quality, preventive health care, people with disabilities often delay getting regular wellness screening, and secondary health problems may go untreated. Both avenues result in a higher cost of care which impacts the rest of the population.

Program Overview

The South Carolina Interagency Office of Disability and Health (SCIODH) partnered with the S.C. Office of Rural Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) breast and cervical cancer program, Best Chance Network, to:

- Identify rural sites
- Obtain permission to survey patients about their disability status before and after the assessment
- Conduct an accessibility assessment of the facility
- Educate facility staff regarding the need for and how to provide equitable services
- Produce a priority ordered list of recommended modifications to increase accessibility and verify completion
- Review and approve funding requests, and distribute funds

Making a Difference

To date, we have assessed 114 facilities in 42 out of 46 counties in South Carolina. The active patient load impacted is more than 572,000. We have acquired \$27,000 in funding for facility modifications. Among the improvements already completed by several facilities are:

- Designated accessible parking
- Constructed accessible entries including ramps and front doors
- Modified restrooms for complete accessibility
- Purchased wheelchair accessible scales
- Purchased adjustable height exam tables

Shaping Tomorrow

The SCIODH will continue to partner with the S.C. Office of Rural Health to apply for additional S.C. Blue Cross/Blue Shield grants to modify medical facilities for American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

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"Thank you for all you have done so that people with all abilities can be seen at our practice."



*Margaret C. Taylor,
DNP, APRN, BC –
Sycamore Health
Care, LLC*

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