

Communication in the Hospital

Patients

Hospital and Emergency Department (ED) visits can be scary. The emergency room can be noisy and busy, making communication even more difficult than usual. Access to visual cues may not be possible due to the need to wear personal protective equipment such as masks. It is very important that you and your nurses and doctors understand each other.

A Communication Access Plan (CAP) is a one-page form that can be used to determine what is needed to communicate effectively with a person with hearing loss.

By law through the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act, medical facilities and hospitals must provide services to you, your family, and your caregivers to help with communication so you can understand your treatment options, make good decisions, and receive the best and safest care possible. *Amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic, we must recognize medical centers are overwhelmed and may not be pro-active in making their services accessible. **You have the responsibility to ensure you are prepared to notify medical professionals of your needs to be able to effectively communicate.*** This means you will need to know a few things and bring your own communication tools to the hospital.

Helpful Tips:

- **When placing or removing masks, oxygen, or glasses, verify your hearing aids remain in place.**
- Print and ask to have a sign posted over your bed that shows you are hard of hearing or deaf.
- Tell staff you are hard of hearing and need hospital staff to communicate with you differently.
- Ask that your Communication Action Plan (CAP) has been reviewed by staff and included in your Medical Record.
- Ask to wear your hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant processor(s) while in the Emergency Department or prior to any procedures. If this is not possible, ask that device(s) be put into a container or baggie with your name on it.



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