



# What is Accessible Healthcare to Deaf People?

2023

# What is Access?

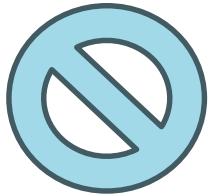


## Problem Statement

- Current plan information and website designs are not universally designed for access. This creates barriers to healthcare access, enrollment, and early intervention to care for the Deaf community.



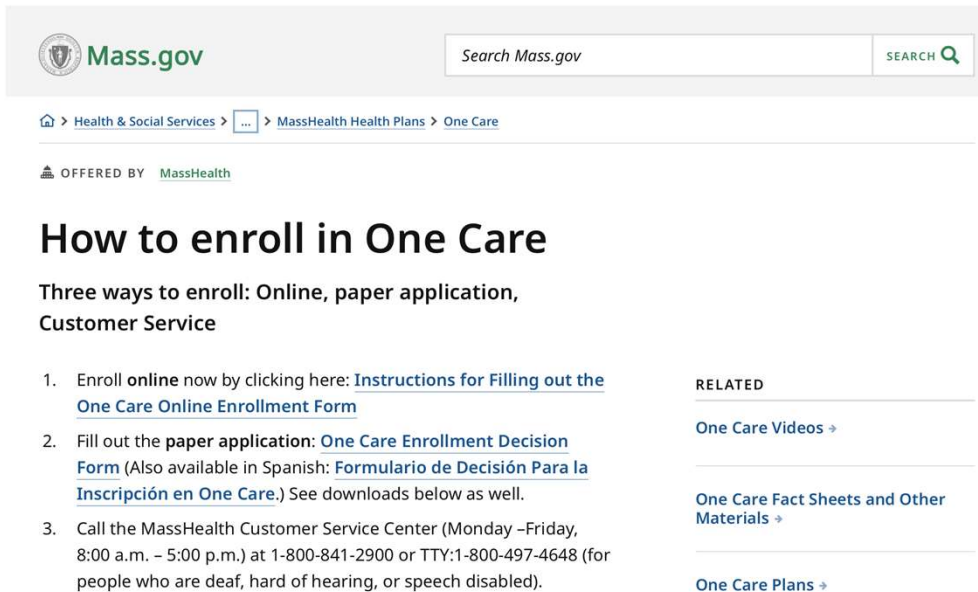




## Inaccessible Information/Website

### Missing features

- Visual Information
- Language Options
- Method to Request Interpreters
- Culturally competent information
- Screen/Braille reader accessible?
- Videophone number
- TTY is outdated technology



The screenshot shows the Mass.gov website. At the top is the Mass.gov logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Health & Social Services > MassHealth Health Plans > One Care. The page is titled "How to enroll in One Care" and lists three ways to enroll: Online, paper application, and Customer Service. The online enrollment section includes a link to "Instructions for Filling out the One Care Online Enrollment Form". The paper application section includes a link to "One Care Enrollment Decision Form" and mentions a Spanish version. The customer service section provides the MassHealth Customer Service Center contact information. On the right side, there is a "RELATED" section with links to "One Care Videos", "One Care Fact Sheets and Other Materials", and "One Care Plans".

**How to enroll in One Care**

Three ways to enroll: Online, paper application, Customer Service

1. Enroll **online** now by clicking here: [Instructions for Filling out the One Care Online Enrollment Form](#)
2. Fill out the **paper application**: [One Care Enrollment Decision Form](#) (Also available in Spanish: [Formulario de Decisión Para la Inscripción en One Care.](#)) See downloads below as well.
3. Call the MassHealth Customer Service Center (Monday –Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) at 1-800-841-2900 or TTY:1-800-497-4648 (for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled).

**RELATED**

- [One Care Videos](#) →
- [One Care Fact Sheets and Other Materials](#) →
- [One Care Plans](#) →

## Access Action #1 - Accessible Websites

### Features Included:

- Font size, color scheme for low vision and color-blindness
- Audio descriptions
- Screen and braille reader accessible
- Language options
- Embedded vlogs in ASL – direct language access
- The interpreter symbol to signal commitment to provide access



and provide meaningful assistance while appreciating that each person has unique needs and experiences.

**ASL Videos**

ASL Video - Welcome to the Dis... Search 1/12 Watch later Share

MORE VIDEOS

0:12 / 1:55

Click on top right to see all 12 videos.

**Share this page**

f t in e

**Civil Legal Aid for Persons with Disabilities Who are Victims of Crime**

The Disability Law Center may be able to provide legal assistance to Persons with Disabilities who are crime survivors with civil matters related to the person's disability.

CLAVC Outr... Search

you qualify for services, they are fre

Committable Podcast



## **Access Action #2 – Direct Communication / Language Justice**

- Develop Vlogs for welcome info and plan descriptions
- Videophone number in addition to TTY
- If you hire a Deaf employee, they can have direct access to members
- VRI is a deterrent for many Deaf people
  - Often used in crisis
  - iPad screen/connectivity issues
  - Privacy/HIPAA issues in ER



## **Requirement #3 – Lead with Cultural Competency to draw in Deaf Community**

- Competency means having an employee who is a member of that community which means a person in the Deaf community
- Deaf to Deaf direct communication
- Culturally competent care reduces delays in seeking preventative care. It also reduces unnecessary and expensive exams and tests
- Invest in training designated employees in ASL classes and Deaf Culture 101
- Partner with MCDHH to enhance cultural knowledge





## The Solution - Deaf Care Coordinators



- Provide access to care through language justice and cultural competence – easier and more cost effective to hire and train one Deaf employee
- Direct explanation of information versus interpretation
- Collectivist cultural values are shared by the community – a Deaf Care Coordinator will attract many Deaf community members and the community will spread the word
- Reduces need for interpreters and therefore interpreter scarcity, VRI ineffectiveness and scheduling challenges will be partially alleviated

## Support and Educate Providers

- Providers need to be educated on working with Deaf people
- Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) isn't the answer
- On-site Interpreters are a reasonable accommodation. Shortage of interpreters is not a viable reason to refuse providing.
- Hire Interpreters x hours a week/month
- If hired a Deaf professional, they could guide the providers.



## Alternative but less viable options

- Train non-Deaf case coordinator in Deaf culture and ASL.
- Acquire interpreting contract for minimum of x hours per year.
- Downsides
  - Not as successful as Deaf community member
  - Interpreter scarcity
  - Increased financial burden
  - Less likely to attract Deaf Community
  - Significant increase in administrative coordination





## Resources

- [Disability Policy Consortium](#)
- [Disability Law Center](#)
- [Mass Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)
- [Communication Access Training and Technology Services](#)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services (DHILS)
  - Center for Living and Working <https://www.centerlw.org/>
  - Deaf Inc. <https://www.deafincma.org/>
- Sharon Hirt Director of Communication Access at Advocates  
[Smaclea@advocates.org](mailto:Smaclea@advocates.org)