



eBook

Document Accessibility

A Legal Mandate, and Opportunity to Effectively Communicate
with your Persons With Disabilities (PWD) Patient Population

Understanding Document Accessibility



This eBook is intended as a primer for Healthcare providers, entities, institutions and organizations who want to improve communications and document accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.

Please read to better understand the **needs** of this growing patient population, and the **legal ramifications** of not taking steps towards document accessibility today.

Healthcare providers like you pride themselves on serving the needs of their communities. But, have you truly considered the needs of your entire community? If your Healthcare entity does not have a comprehensive plan in place to serve your Persons with Disabilities (PWD) demographic, these valued patients may be experiencing unnecessary barriers to accessing vital healthcare information and communications.

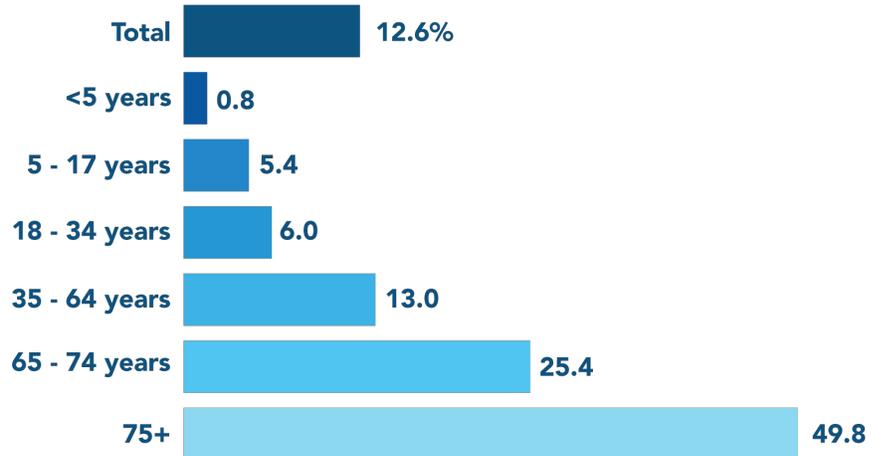
One common source of frustration for this growing population is the inaccessibility of critical documentation like monthly financial statements, EOB's and other important healthcare information. This eBook is intended to help you understand the barriers experienced by individuals with physical, cognitive, and/or vision disabilities when accessing these types of communications. You will learn how to assess the current state of your documents, and how to identify the right processes and technology to make your healthcare documents readily useable and accessible for all people.

Remember, barriers to accessibility are not just a patient experience shortfall; they also create the risk of pricey legal action against your organization and, prevent your healthcare entity from properly serving this rapidly growing population. Moving towards accessible documents will not only help bring you into compliance with legislation like the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), it will also open fresh new ways to serve this expanded patient population better and effectively.

EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE IMPORTANT HEALTHCARE INFORMATION TO YOUR ENTIRE PATIENT POPULATION THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) DRIVES CRITICAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS AND EFFORTS

Older Americans are more likely to have a disability

% of U.S. population reporting a disability



Data from US Census Bureau, 2015, as reported by [Pew Research](#)

Are you able to effectively communicate with your patients who have hearing, vision, speech or cognitive disabilities?

One in 4 U.S. adults – 61 million Americans – have a disability that impacts major life activities, according to a report in the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: the age demographic of 65 years and older representing a staggering 74.2% of this number. Specifically, visual impairments complicate day-to-day life for many aging adults creating unwanted burden and stress.

Anticipated demographic shifts mean that healthcare providers can expect an uptick in disability rates among their patient’s as the Baby Boomer population ages. Preparing for these changes by implementing accessible communication solutions now will ensure that all patients receive the highest level of quality healthcare and outcomes available.

Key Takeaway: Poor communication with this vulnerable and growing population can significantly undermine your efforts to provide quality healthcare.

As baby boomers increase in age, the face of the American population will change dramatically. By the year 2030, a projected 71 million Americans will be age 65 or older, an increase of more than 200 percent from the year 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Importance Of Proper Communication To A Growing Demographic



Aging healthcare consumers will increase the demand for physicians' services. In the United States, people over the age of 65 visit their doctor an average of eight times per year, compared to the general population's average of five visits per year. Physicians should prepare for an increasing number of older patients by developing a greater understanding of this population and how to enhance communication with them.

The communication process in general is complex and can be further complicated by age. One of the biggest problems' physicians face when dealing with older patients is that they are more varied than younger people. Their wide range of life experiences and cultural backgrounds often influence their "perception of illness, willingness to adhere to medical regimens and ability to communicate effectively with health care providers." At a time when older patients have the greatest need to communicate with their physicians, life and physiologic changes make it the most difficult.

Because unclear communication can cause the entire medical encounter to fall apart, physicians should pay careful attention to this aspect of their practice. Many of these suggestions can be applied to patients of all age demographics: however, they are particularly important with aging adults, for whom less-than-optimal communication may have more negative consequences.

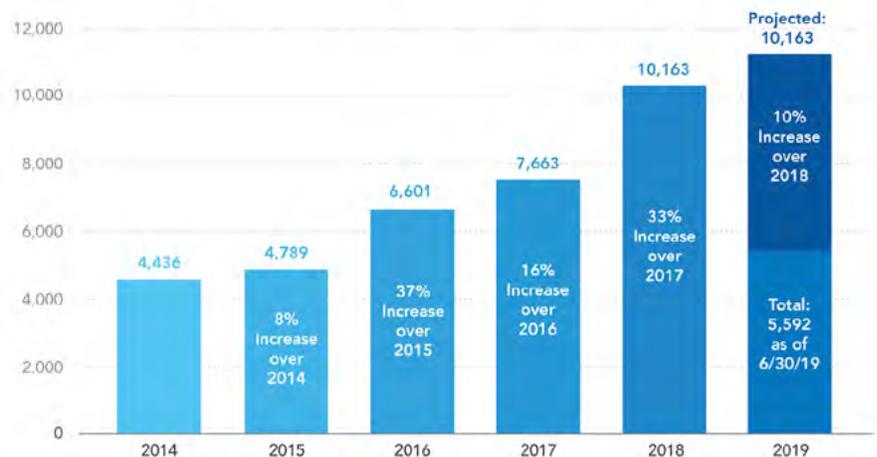
The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act became law in 1990, but more recent rulings indicate that the accessibility mandates within it apply to web and document copy as well.

There is a trend towards rapidly escalating legal action - while most cases settle, the fall out is equally as costly. When considering the costs of defending an accessibility lawsuit or action from the Department of Justice, take into consideration that beyond the fine, there is the cost to your reputation, the cost of legal representation, post-settlement audit costs and so forth.



ADA Title III Lawsuits in Federal Court Jan. 2014 - Jun. 2019



www.adatitleiii.com

1) <https://www.bankersonline.com/qa/2019-legal-alert-bank-ada-lawsuits-mount>

The reality check here is this: your organization could proactively implement an accessible document solution quickly and cost-effectively to support all your PWD patients. Don't wait for costly Title III lawsuits to drive your decision.

The Accessible Document Challenge



Addressing accessibility challenges across your entire Healthcare continuum will help you meet the Department of Justice (DOJ) compliance guidelines for the visually impaired, which are an important part of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A, AA and AAA also provide useful guidance across the globe to organizations working to provide an inclusive digital experience. These guidelines cover a wide range of recommendations to make digital content accessible to all users, and are based on the following four principles:

Principle 1: Perceivable - Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

Principle 2: Operable - User interface components and navigation must be operable.

Principle 3: Understandable - Information and the operation of user interfaces must be understandable.

Principle 4: Robust - Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

By working with web designers and technology providers who are well versed in these regulations and guidelines, you can ensure your Healthcare Organization is fully compliant. Document accessibility is an essential part of the broader accessibility picture, because your entire patient population, rely on communications that are easily accessible regardless of their chosen device or preferred method of communication.

The Accessible Document Challenge

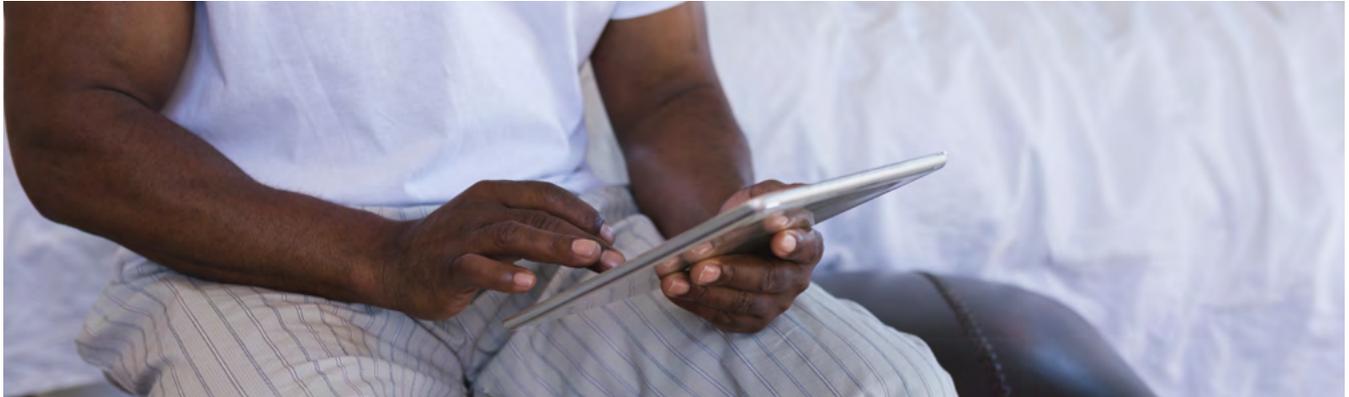


Healthcare is one of the most important issues of our time. Ensuring that healthcare is accessible, and how best to achieve such access, is a topic central to nearly every political discussion. People with disabilities have been vocal advocates, fighting to ensure that the disability community has access to vital healthcare related communications and services.

Both DOJ and private litigants have used the ADA to actively address issues of effective communication in healthcare; consequently, a high percentage of ADA cases against healthcare providers question whether the provider met its obligation to provide auxiliary aids and services when necessary to ensure effective communication.

The ADA requires that communication with people with disabilities must be “as effective” as communication with others.

Disabilities And Document Usability



Making content accessible enables users to correctly navigate content, avoid “keyboard traps” and do everything users without a disability can do. This, in turn, enhances the patient experience, while increasing loyalty and retention.

Here are some of the ways in which a disability can influence how people access documents at your healthcare organization. Remember, a Person with Disabilities may experience challenges across several of these categories:

1 in 5 North American adults has a disability, and half of those disabilities are invisible. Your inclusive communication technology helps more people than you realize.

PHYSICAL

Challenge:

May use assistive technology to help read, click, or scroll through websites and documents.

May require extra time to make selections – watch for “time out” settings.

Requiring patients with physical disabilities to travel can cause difficulty.

Accommodations:

Avoiding “keyboard traps” (circumstances in which a mouse MUST be used to access websites or documents) is also crucial for patients who use alternate means of accessing their healthcare information.

VISUAL

Challenge:

Vision disabilities range from mild impairments to complete loss of sight.

They can include color blindness or the inability to read certain colors of text against screen backgrounds.

Likelihood of visual impairment increase with age.

Accommodations:

Documents must be tagged and formatted to be consumable by people who use assistive devices such as screen readers.

Being able to enlarge text helps readers with low vision access statement information. Selecting serif-free, simple fonts, and a careful selection of color and contrast makes the reading of any document easier for this group as well.

COGNITIVE

Challenge:

May struggle with long paragraphs or multiple pages of dense health information.

Extra time to review information and easy access to online and/or phone assistance will make communicating easier for patients with cognitive disabilities.

Accommodations:

Will benefit from your efforts to reduce jargon and simplify language.

Clear communication with easy to understand language along with links to additional information will dramatically improve the overall patient experience.

What Does An Accessible Document Look Like?



An accessible document, like this eStatement, looks the same as the eStatements you are providing today. But behind the scenes, it contains extra attributes that allow it to be reviewed by people using screen readers, voice assistants, or other adaptive technology. Here are a few examples:

CLIENT LOGO Doxim Indy
Attn: Customer Service
PO Box 102
Indianapolis, IN 46206-0102

TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

14055500962668

↑ Tear Here ↑

Access Your Account or Pay Online
URL.COM

pay Pay with a picture in seconds!
Search Papaya Payments in the App Store

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

Guarantor: IMA SAMPLE	Description	Provider	Charges	Credits	Balance
1/20/2020 000000	000000 LEVEL 4 NEW		210.00		
1/20/2020 000000	000000 X-RAY		144.00		
1/20/2020 000000	000000 DIAGNOSE		84.00		
1/20/2020 000000	000000 MEDICINE		80.00		
1/20/2020 000000	000000 TREATMENT		52.00		
1/20/2020 000000	000000 MEDICINE		50.00		
1/20/2020 000000	000000 INHALER 1 MG		14.00		
1/20/2020 000000	000000 INHALER		14.00		
000000	01/20/2020 - PATIENT PAYMENT (APPLIED TO: 01/20/2020)			230.00	230.00
000000	02/10/2020 - ADJUSTMENT (APPLIED TO: 01/20/2020)			653.15	
000000	02/10/2020 - PAYMENT (APPLIED TO: 01/20/2020)			230.50	
000000	02/10/2020 - YOUR BALANCE DUE ON THESE SERVICES				
	Sub Totals:		\$648.00	\$618.65	\$29.35
	Grand Totals:		\$648.00	\$618.65	\$29.35
	Account Credit:			\$0.00	
	PATIENT BALANCE DUE:				\$29.35

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Use **headings** to allow accessible tech users to navigate through the document in a logical fashion.

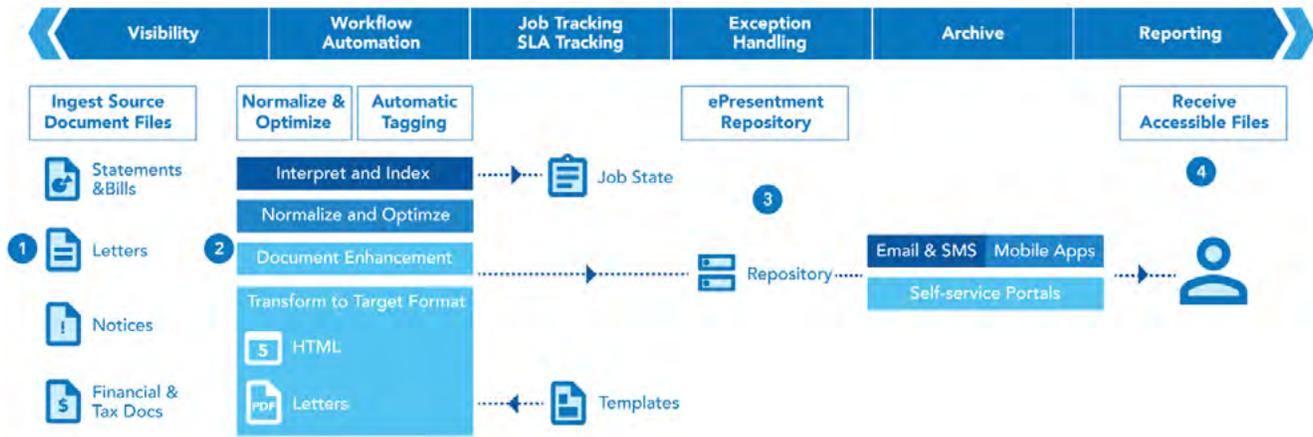
Ensure **fonts** and **layout** can accommodate zooming for readers with low vision.

Make information in **tables** readily available, in the right order for comprehension.

Make **URLs** accessible to patient's who are not using a mouse.

Expert Tip: Include **alternate attributes**, like text explaining what is happening in an image, so visually impaired patients understand the entire context of the image.

How Does An Accessible Content Solution Work?



- 1) Source files (statements, bills, letters, etc.) are ingested from your document provider.
- 2) Files are matched to a template, created in an accessibility designer, that adds the additional attributes required for accessibility. After the optimization and tagging process is completed, documents are available in accessible PDF or HTML format.
- 3) Accessible documents are pushed to a secure ePresentation Repository, from which they can be accessed via multiple channels like self-serve portals and mobile apps.
- 4) PWD access their documents and review using their preferred technologies.

Getting Started With Accessible Documents



Accessible communication is not just the law, it is also a way to reach an underserved, and growing, population. As you work towards enhancing your digital footprint, leverage the variety of touch points to easily connect with your community so no individual gets left behind.

By implementing an accessible document solution, your healthcare organization will be taking essential steps towards ADA compliance while reducing your risk of a lawsuit. You will also be eliminating barriers for patients with disabilities to access their critical healthcare information while enhancing their experience with your organization. Your patients expect your healthcare facility to be fully accessible and compliant and will not be shy about going elsewhere if you are unable to comfortably serve them.

And best of all, accessible documents are not expensive to implement, so all these benefits can be achieved for just pennies per document.

To learn more book a conversation with a Doxim expert now!



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Doxim is a leading provider of SaaS-based customer communications and engagement software for banks, credit unions, and wealth management firms. Doxim's Customer Engagement Platform helps financial institutions transform their client experience, communicate effectively throughout the client lifecycle and improve cross-sell and upsell activities that drive increased wallet share. The platform addresses key digitization challenges, from automated account opening, through improved, personalized communications to anytime, anywhere content access, tailored to a client's channel preferences. This eliminates costly traditional paper-based, manual processes and enables cost-effective provision of an omni-channel experience that delights customers and improves their long-term loyalty. Find out more at www.doxim.com.