



Appendix 2.9

Documentation Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of frequently asked questions that staff or clinicians may present about the collection of patients' disability status and accommodation needs.

1. Why is disability status and accommodation needs being collected?

To provide equitable, patient-centered care that responds to the needs of an organization's patient population, patients' disability status data needs to be consistently collected. Also, it's the law! Healthcare organizations must document patients' disability status to track the quality of care delivered to patients with disabilities and to identify patients who require healthcare accommodations.

2. Why are these questions being collected by staff other than clinicians?

All healthcare team members need to be aware if a patient has a disability so that everyone from the scheduler to the clinician to the phlebotomist can accommodate patients with disabilities. Disability status and needs are patient reported and do not require clinical decision making to determine answers to the questions. Staff simply document what patients report to them in response to the questions.

3. How do patients feel about being asked to disclose their disability status?

In surveys, 94% of patients with and without disabilities report being comfortable with healthcare organizations collecting their disability status information.

4. How should I respond if someone refuses to answer the question?

Patients are not required to provide a response to the disability status questions. Staff should mark "Prefer not to answer" or "Declined to Answer" in the electronic health record if a patient does not want to answer.

5. What do I do if a patient requests a specific accommodation and I'm not aware of whether we have it?

You could respond with: "Thank you for sharing your needs. At this time, we cannot guarantee that a specific clinic or facility will have the requested accommodation. However, I will make a note about this in your chart so that the clinic staff is aware of your needs."

6. What if someone says they do not have a disability, but I think they might?

Disability status is a patient-reported field, just like race and ethnicity. Clinicians and staff should not assume or record a disability in the disability status field if the patient does not report having one.