

Sensory and Speech Impairment Policy

Policy:

SEMO Vision Care will take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure that persons with disabilities, including persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind, or who have other sensory or manual impairments, have an equal opportunity to participate in all services we offer. These efforts are intended to ensure effective communication with patients/clients involving their medical conditions, treatment, services and benefits including provisions to access patient documents, including waivers of rights, consent to treatment forms, financial and insurance benefits forms or any such forms where a patient is acknowledging information concerning care at our practice. Within reason and without undue burden on the practice, all necessary auxiliary aids and services shall be provided without cost to the person being served.

All staff will be provided written notice of all our non-discrimination and disability assistance policies and procedure and trained in our policies.

Procedures:

Identification and assessment of need

SEMO Vision Care provides notice of the availability of auxiliary aids and services. Such notice will be posted in the entry area of the office. Such notification is also included in our website. When an individual self-identifies as a person with a disability that affects the ability to communicate or to access or manipulate written materials or requests an auxiliary aid or service, staff will consult with the individual to determine what aids or services are necessary to provide effective communication and make all reasonable attempts to provide such accommodations.

Provisions for Patients Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or have language limitations

For patients who are deaf/hard of hearing and who use sign language as their primary means of communication, SEMO Vision Care, as needed and within reason will provide effective interpretation or arrange for a qualified interpreter. Our Office Manager or Doctor will:

- Where applicable, maintain a list of staff member's names, phone numbers, and qualifications for providing specific interpretation or other communication skills.
- Maintain a list of interpreter services in the area to be used when needed. If video interpreter services are provided via computer, the procedures for accessing the service will be included in the listing.
- When communication by telephone with patients who are deaf or hard of hearing, SEMO Vision Care will, within reason, investigate alternative means of telephone communication including TDD or TYY services.
- Family members or friends of the person will not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by that individual and after an offer of an interpreter at no charge to the person has been made by the facility. Such an offer and the response will be documented in the person's file.

NOTE: More information regarding SEMO Vision Care's policies for language assistance may be found in our Limited English Proficiency Policy.

Provisions for Patients Who are Blind or Who Have Low Vision

Where possible, SEMO Vision Care may provide forms, documents and acknowledgements in large print. When not possible, Staff will communicate information contained in written materials concerning treatment, benefits, services, waivers of rights, and consent to treatment forms by reading out loud and explaining these forms to persons who are blind or who have low vision. Staff will also assist such individuals, as needed, in filling out forms and otherwise providing information in a written format. The Office Manager is responsible for ensuring all such services are provided as needed.

Provisions for Patients With Speech Impairments

To ensure effective communication with persons with speech impairments, Staff will assist patients by using written materials, computers or other communication aids. The Office Manager will oversee provision of such assistive services.

Provisions for Patients With Manual Impairments

When patients with manual impairments cannot manipulate forms, documents, acknowledgements or other written material, Staff will assist holding the materials and turning pages as needed, or by providing written communication, computer services, verbal communication or other methods to help to ensure effective communication by individuals with manual impairments. The Office Manager will oversee provision of such assistive services.

Staff will be trained and continually updated regarding these policies.