



**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ON HEALTH AND DISABILITY RESEARCH BRIEF  
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**COVID-19 & DISABILITY SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS ON HEALTH CARE FOR  
PERSONS WITH SERIOUS DIFFICULTY READING, WRITING, OR COMMUNICATING**

**Introduction**

People with disabilities experience unique risks during disasters, epidemics, and pandemics that can impact health and health care. *Yet, we do not know the full impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities.*

**Research Approach**

AAHD conducted the COVID-19 and Disability Survey between April 17 and May 1, 2020, and 2,469 adults with disabilities responded. Adults with difficulties reading, writing, or communicating made up 1% of the sample (34 persons).

**Main Findings- Access to Regular Health Care & Services for Persons With Serious Difficulty Reading, Writing, Or Communicating**

**Use of Direct Care Workers & Impact of COVID-19**

- 41% of respondents reported having a Direct Care Worker (DCW).
- Of these, 64% were still receiving DCW services during the pandemic.
- **29% of respondents still receiving DCW services were unable to maintain safe distances from their Direct Care Worker.**

**Access to Regular Health Care Treatment**

- 50% of respondents who needed regular health care (such as physical therapy, dialysis, etc.) were able to receive it during the pandemic.
- **50% of respondents needing regular health care reported their access had been disrupted during the pandemic.**

**Access to Prescription Medications**

- Among respondents taking prescriptions, 95% reported no access problems.
- **Only 5% of respondents reported access to prescription medication access had been disrupted during the pandemic, but any disruption of life-sustaining medication can be critical.**

**New Challenges to Accessing Health Care**

- 77% of respondents reported that they were not facing new challenges to accessing health care.
- **23% of respondents reported new challenges to accessing health care and prescriptions!**

**Conclusion**

- **Population-based research is critically needed to fully document these problems.**

Full results are available at: <https://www.aahd.us/initiatives/dissemination/covid-19-disability-survey/>.

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