

## The DOJ Announces Another Settlement Under Its Barrier-Free Health Care Initiative

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The U.S. **Department of Justice Department** announced a [settlement](#) with Franciscan St. James Health (St. James), **requiring that patients and companions who are deaf or hard of hearing** receive sign language interpreters and other services necessary to **ensure effective communication**, in compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the agreement, St. James will pay \$70,000 in damages to a patient who is deaf who was allegedly denied a sign language interpreter throughout her four day stay in the hospital. The settlement also requires that St. James provide auxiliary aids and services, including sign language interpreters, to people who are deaf or hard of hearing within prescribed time frames and free of charge; designate an ADA Administrator; use their grievance resolution systems to investigate disputes regarding effective communication with deaf and hard of hearing patients; post notices of their effective communication policy; and train hospital personnel on the effective communication requirements of the ADA. The settlement is part of the [Department's Barrier-Free Health Care Initiative](#), a partnership of the Civil Rights Division and U. S. Attorney's offices across the nation to enforce the requirement under Title III of the ADA requirement that people with disabilities, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, who have HIV, or who have mobility disabilities, have equal access to medical services.

*Thanks to our colleague Joseph J. Lynett for this post.*

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National Law Review, Volume IV, Number 357

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/doj-announces-another-settlement-under-its-barrier-free-health-care-initiative>