HHS Finalizes Rule Regarding Disability Discrimination



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On May 9, 2024, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights published a final rule updating decades old regulations implementing healthcare related provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs receiving federal financial assistance, as well as those conducted by federal agencies. The final rule impacts anyone receiving federal financial assistance, including any grant, loan, contract, or any other arrangement where HHS provides funds, the services of personnel, or the use or transfer of property for less than fair market value. The final rule addresses a range of patient care services for covered people and entities. For example, websites must meet certain standards for disability accessibility that align with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Medical equipment, such as exam tables, mammography machines, and weight scales, must be accessible to persons with disabilities. The rule also provides that, under certain circumstances, service animals must be permitted, as well as mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, segways, and golf carts.

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