

March 5, 2017

**ISSUE: March is Disability Awareness month.**

Individuals with disabilities are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society, and are often misunderstood and underserved.

A disability is a physical or mental condition that limits movements, senses, or activities such that those with disabilities have deficits in areas of life activities that limit individuals from living a full, normal life or from holding a gainful job.

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Over a billion people, about 15% of the world's population, have some form of disability. Between 110 million and 190 million adults have significant difficulties in functioning. Rates of disability are increasing due to population aging and increases in chronic health conditions, among other causes.

**TEACHING:** What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

Romans 14:12-13: So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

USCCB calls for promoting a safe and hospitable environment for all human beings, especially those who are most vulnerable.

**ACTION:** What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Recognize and treat all individuals with disabilities as a persons first and not as disabled persons. For example say, ða person with mental illness,ð not ða mentally ill person,ð for we are always a person first in the eyes of God.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

<https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/>

March 12, 2017

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Individuals with disabilities are often seen as less important and treated with different standards, even aborted due to having a disability.

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) defines disability as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is the interaction between individuals with a health condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g. negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social supports). Over a billion people are estimated to live with some form of disability. This corresponds to about 15% of the world's population. Between 110 million (2.2%) and 190 million (3.8%) people 15 years and older have significant difficulties in functioning. Furthermore, the rates of disability are increasing in part due to aging populations and an increase in chronic health conditions.

**TEACHING:** What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

**Micah 6:8:** He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

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Discrimination against individuals with disabilities should not be allowed.

The true measure of the greatness of a society will always be in terms of how it treats its weakest members, and the authenticity of our own love will be measured by our compassion and acceptance of the disabled and powerless. God seems to send us children with disabilities to help us grow, to remind us that every soul is of greater importance than its frail body, and to teach us how man's highest calling is found in his God-like possibility of sharing unconditional love.  
*(Criterion: Fr. Tad Pacholczyk)*

**ACTION:** What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Despite our hidden fears and hesitations when it comes to dealing with a person with severe disabilities, we must apply the same standards to them as we would to any child of God.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

[www.nhbcenter.org](http://www.nhbcenter.org) National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia.

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March 19, 2017

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Individuals with disabilities are dramatically unemployed.

For 2015 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported only 17.5 percent of persons with disabilities were employed. In contrast, the employment-population ratio for those without a disability was 65.0 percent. This indicates individuals with disabilities are not only underemployed, which has negative personal and financial effects, but also they are an under used work force, which has negative effects on the individuals and productivity of all industries.

**TEACHING:** What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

**Ecclesiastes 3:13** : Also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toilô this is God's gift to man.

Pope Francis pointed out, "Work is fundamental to the dignity of a person. . . It gives one the ability to maintain oneself, one's family, to contribute to the growth of one's own nation."

Unfortunately, millions of workers today are denied this honor and respect as a result of unemployment, underemployment, unjust wages, wage theft, abuse, and exploitation.

**ACTION:** What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

Eat, shop, and use businesses that hire individuals with disabilities.

Indiana is reaching out to large corporations and smaller businesses, helping them directly tap into the Indiana disability community as a powerful labor and customer base. The Indiana Institute and its partners, along with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services, are providing resources, training, and other services to Indiana businesses as they discover the benefits of hiring employees with disabilities. Businesses often find that their overall productivity increases and that workers with disabilities can be loyal, valuable team members who bring a unique perspective, and can help expand company outreach capabilities.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

**<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/employment>**

March 26, 2017

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People with disabilities have less access to health care services and, therefore, experience unmet health care needs.

People with disabilities report seeking more health care than people without disabilities and have greater unmet needs. For example, a recent survey of people with serious mental disorders showed that between 35% and 50% of people in developed countries, and between 76% and 85% in developing countries, received no treatment in the year prior to the study. Health promotion and prevention activities seldom target people with disabilities. For example, women with disabilities receive less screening for breast and cervical cancer than women without disabilities. People with intellectual impairments and diabetes are less likely to have their weight checked.

People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to deficiencies in health care services. Depending on the group and setting, persons with disabilities may experience greater vulnerability to secondary conditions, co-morbid conditions, age-related conditions, engaging in health risk behaviors and higher rates of premature death.

*(World Health Organization)*

**TEACHING:** What the Church teaches, is in scripture, or is the position of the archdiocese or USCCB:

Matthew 5:5 : ðBlessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

All people with disabilities have the same general health care needs as everyone else and, therefore, need access to mainstream health care services. Article 25 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) reinforces the right of persons with disabilities to attain the highest standard of health care, without discrimination.

**ACTION:** What we can do to promote equality, rights, health, safety and dignity of others:

According to the World Health Organization, the following actions should be implemented to overcome significant barriers to health care for individuals with disabilities:

1. **Insure availability** of appropriate services for people with disabilities. Encourage health-care providers to make services accessible and to provide comprehensive assessments, treatment, and follow-ups.
2. **Overcome physical barriers** by assuring accessible medical equipment, signage, doorways, internal and external steps, bathroom facilities, and parking areas at health care facilities
3. **Enhance the skills and knowledge of health workers.** People with disabilities were more than twice as likely to report finding health care provider skills inadequate to meet their needs, four times more likely to report being treated badly and nearly three times more likely to report being denied care.
4. **Enhance policies and legislation** to reduce health inequalities and plan improvements for access and inclusion. Establish health care standards related to care of persons with disabilities with enforcement mechanisms.
5. **Improve health care financing** to ensure that people with disabilities are covered, and to consider measures to make the premiums affordable.
6. **Ensure that people with disabilities benefit equally from public health care programs.**
7. Consider options for **reducing or removing out-of-pocket payments** for people with disabilities who do not have other means of financing health care services.
8. Empower people with disabilities to **maximize their health by providing information, training, and peer support.** Identify groups that require alternative service delivery models, for example, targeted services or care coordination to improve access to health care.
9. **Include people with disabilities in health care surveillance.**
10. **Conduct more research** on the needs, barriers, and health outcomes for people with disabilities.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf>