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Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

by Ingrid Hendrix on July 24th, 2020 in [Family & Community Care](#), [Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation](#) | [0 Comments](#)

https://www.adaanniversary.org/sites/default/files/ADA30-blog-post_0.jpg

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Sunday, July 26th marks the day 30 years ago President George H. W. Bush signed into law the world's first civil rights act for persons with disabilities. This was a momentous day for disability rights activists who had been working hard for more than 30 years to enact changes in the lives of people with disabilities. The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in regards to education, housing, transportation, architectural access, employment and other areas of public life. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Currently, one in four Americans identifies as having a physical or mental disability.

As a person with a disability who has experienced our country before and after passage of this important law, the changes are life altering. Ramps, pushbuttons and elevators are all common sights that many growing up post-ADA take for granted. Lifts on buses, job accommodations and integrated education are all expected or assumed. People with intellectual disabilities have the right to live in the community, be employed, and choose their partner.

Has the ADA solved all the issues people with disability face? Hardly. As with other civil rights laws, it provides legal recourse, but attitudes and awareness are more entrenched and harder to change.

July is also Disability Pride Month, an effort to encourage people with disabilities to take pride in their identity and shift the narratives of stigma and ableism.

Health care is one area that lags behind the public sector in accessibility. Few clinics have adjustable exam tables, space in exam rooms to navigate a wheelchair, scales to weigh people with limited mobility, access to sign language interpreters or large print and braille patient education material. Despite encountering large numbers of patients with disabilities in practice, medical students seldom receive training in working with this population. While other minorities are increasingly represented in the health professions, people with disabilities are often excluded due to lack of accommodations

on admissions.

The fight is not over, but the world is a much more welcoming place for people with disabilities.

Further exploration:

ADAA website <https://www.adaanniversary.org/home>

DREDF Health Care Stories: <https://dredf.org/healthcare-stories/>

Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution. 2020 Film. Netflix. <https://www.netflix.com/title/81001496>

Heumann, J. E., Joiner, K., & Beacon Press. (2020). *Being Heumann : an unrepentant memoir of a disability rights activist*. Beacon Press. <https://hslic-unm.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1119745182>

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