July 25, 2019

The Honorable William Barr  
United States Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Re: Support of Regulations on Accessible Medical Equipment

Dear Attorney General Barr:

The undersigned write to you with a critical message during Disability Pride month and on the eve of the 29th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

We are a coalition of disability rights organizations and government agencies charged with protecting the rights of people with disabilities. We seek to provide input to you, the President, Congress and other federal agencies, on behalf of the disability community, regarding the rights of persons with disabilities to access medical equipment. Our coalition’s focus is to build on the attached report, *Breaking Down Barriers, Breaking the Silence: Making Health Care Accessible for Women with Disabilities* and achieve medical access for all New Yorkers.

We strongly urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to reconsider its withdrawal (82 Fed. Reg. 60932 (12/26/2017)) of the proposed rule issued by DOJ in 2010 (75 Fed. Reg. 43452 (7/26/2010)) in response to critical recommendations by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) regarding the accessibility of medical equipment. Withdrawing the proposed rule has resulted in millions of people with disabilities being denied access to medical care.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that medical providers make their services accessible to people with disabilities. However, as our report found, health disparities for people with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, are startling, and have been a concern for decades, although a concern omitted from most reports and discussions of healthcare allocation. The lack of accessible medical equipment has led to delayed or missed diagnoses of cancer and premature deaths. Inaccessible healthcare can also negatively impact nearly all other aspects of an individual’s life. On the other hand, the social, psychological, physical, and economic well-being of persons with disabilities can be
significantly improved if timely screening and treatment were made accessible to all people with disabilities.

Lives literally hang in the balance. It is imperative that the Access Board standards be resuscitated, implemented, and enforced.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bronx Independent Living Services
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York
Disability Rights Advocates
Harlem Independent Living Center
Independence Care System
Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest*
United Spinal Association

Encl.

* Please direct your response to:
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