



# Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition

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## **Local Medical Practice Discriminates Against More Deaf Patients** **After Lawsuit Filed, More Patients Complain**

Denver – Today the Center for Rights of Parents with Disabilities at the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (“CRPD”), filed an amended lawsuit in the federal district court of Colorado against a Lakewood medical practice on behalf of CRPD and several members. The suit alleges Cohen & Womack, M.D., P.C., doing business as Red Rocks OB-GYN, refuses to provide sign language interpreters for deaf patients.

Annette Guerrero is a Red Rock OB-GYN patient who is deaf. Ms. Guerrero and her husband, who is also deaf, went through her entire pregnancy without knowing simple facts about the progress of her pregnancy. She never knew her weight or the size of her baby. When she was diagnosed with gestational diabetes, the doctors and staff were unable to explain how she was to manage her condition.

“After we filed the first complaint, Dr. Cohen was reported to claim the lawsuit was based upon a miscommunication,” said Carrie Ann Lucas, the director of the CRPD and lead counsel in the case. “It’s certainly a miscommunication – an intentional miscommunication caused when Red Rocks OB-GYN refused to provide sign language interpreters for its patients. ”

"It's shocking that Red Rocks OB-GYN provides Spanish interpreters to ensure Spanish speaking clients have effective communication, but that they don't do the same for Deaf patients," said Jennifer Pfau, one of the plaintiffs in the case. "It's not simply shocking, it's shameful," she said.

The ADA requires health care providers to ensure effective communication with patients through the provision of interpreters, assistive technology, and other auxiliary aids and services

The plaintiffs ask the Court to order the medical practice to provide sign language interpreters to deaf patients to ensure that they understand medical communications. The complaint also requests damages for the plaintiffs.

The CRPD combats discrimination that affects parents with disabilities. The Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition is Colorado’s largest state-wide cross-disability organization and has several thousand members across Colorado.

A copy of the complaint can be found at [http://ccdconline.org/legal/cohen\\_womack.htm](http://ccdconline.org/legal/cohen_womack.htm)

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