

Sheppard Mullin Helps to Establish DC Health's At-Home COVID-19 Testing Program Accessible for the Visually Impaired

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Shepard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP and the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs reached a successful resolution with the District of Columbia Department of Health ("DC Health") to make its at-home COVID-19 testing program, Test Yourself DC, accessible to individuals with vision impairments, including in-home testing assistance.

Sheppard Mullin partners Steven Hollman and Erica Kraus and the Washington Lawyers' Committee represented Blind District of Columbia residents and the District of Columbia Council of the Blind in connection with a lawsuit against DC Health for failing to make the District's at-home COVID testing program accessible to vision-impaired individuals. This service is critically important. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5 percent of District residents have a disability related to their vision. Despite being less than half of the District population, Black residents make up 75 percent of the persons with disabilities and are disproportionately impacted by diseases related to vision loss, including diabetes. Black residents are also more than twice as likely to sicken and die from COVID-19 as white residents.

Following Plaintiffs complaint in June 2022, the District expanded its Test Yourself DC program to include in-home testing assistance for District residents who, due to a disability, need help obtaining or administering at-home COVID-19 tests. The District also updated its Coronavirus website to include screen-reader accessible instructions for each at-home test the District offers through its test distribution locations. And, DC Health has conducted outreach to various organizations that serve District residents with vision impairments notifying them of the availability of in-home testing assistance appointments and how to request them.

"It is heartening to see the District acknowledge that the needs of the disability community must be considered when we formulate and implement health policy," said Sheppard Mullin partner Steven Hollman, who helped represent the Plaintiffs pro bono. "The poet Gwendolyn Brooks reminds us that 'we are each other's magnitude and bond.'"

View Washington Lawyers' Committee press release [here](#).

An accessible copy of the settlement agreement can be found [here](#).

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Practice Areas

Litigation