

# APRIL 2007 CHAPTER MEETING RECAP

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## **Are you ADA Compliant?**

If you did not attend April's meeting, you not only missed incredible food by Maggiano's Little Italy but a lively presentation by Larry Jones, Director of NC Office on the American Disabilities Act. The topic is a massive one and Larry actually does a three day training class on what he condensed to thirty minutes. After the lunch, everyone went away with new knowledge on ADA and full bellies!!

A disability can be an injury that occurred on the job and may or may not be recognizable. Twenty percent of the population has a disability and it is their responsibility when attending a meeting to let the planner and or hotel know what they will need on site with reasonable notice as some equipment may not be readily available. And the entity is not required to have any item needed but with proper notification, they can take care of the disability mentioned. Hotels are required by law to have 5% of their room inventory ADA accessible and these rooms are the last ones sold. And when selecting a site for a potential meeting, it is the program that must be accessible, not the entire facility.

What happens if a complaint is filed against you? Do you need to hire an attorney and pray for a nice judge? Absolutely not – first it is strongly recommended to resolve the issue locally. If that is not a possibility, than mediation is the second option and a mediator can be hired by the Department of Justice to facilitate this along. If the mediation is not met, DOJ will investigate you and everything about the facility, not just the complaint. This is not what you want to happen. Bear in mind that the ADA violation is reviewed on a case by case scenario and it truly depends if it is in fact a violation. If you find yourself in this predicament, call Larry Jones at 919.733.0054 as he will guide you and help resolve the complaint.

Larry shared these helpful hints throughout...

Interpreters are typically \$65.00/hour or more. They can only work 30 minutes before they are required to take a break. If your meeting is longer than an hour, you must hire 2.

Tax credits are available if you make changes to your facility to be in compliance if your building is within those code years.

NC Building Codes are more strict than Federal and each state is different – check with individual hotel when booking a meeting outside of NC.

Be considerate with the set up and have some wide aisle seating as part of the audience – not in the rear of the room where the space for wheel chairs are typically set.

Food disabilities (allergies) do fall under ADA!!

Portable staging must be 1 foot per inch of height – a 12 inch stage must have a 12 foot ramp.

And if you have any questions – please call Larry Jones at 919.733.0054 because each dispute is a case by case scenario and it ALWAYS depends!! More information can also be found at [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov), go to the civil rights page and then the ADA page.

See you May 9, 2007 at the Clarion State Capitol for Wake County Emergency Management to discuss how to be ready ahead of time for a crisis!!