William and Tara just transferred to your college from a college out of state. Although they had planned to complete their respective programs in nursing and dental hygiene before settling in your area, her father's illness has meant a move here earlier than expected. Both students have completed their general core and been accepted into their health science programs. With one high performance semester under their belts, Tara and William have made an appointment to meet with you, share their transcripts and discuss their schedules for the fall.

**MYTH:** Effective communication with these students is not possible in all classroom and clinical settings, or with preceptors, patients and family members.

**FACT:** Each deaf and hard-of-hearing student has a unique way of managing communication in the many interactions they encounter each day. Deaf students have graduated from formidable medical programs across the country. You can rely on your student to be the expert on the accommodations needed in each circumstance. Additionally, instructors and deans should be involved in the decision-making process regarding communication accommodations.

“Although I have been told that Tara's speech is a bit more understandable than mine, she prefers writing back and forth for short conversations to ensure clarity. I am more of a speech and gesture guy with confirmations of understanding as I go along.” - William

**MYTH:** Deaf and hard-of-hearing students will not be able to demonstrate expected skill levels in all areas as required for the undifferentiated graduate of our health science programs.

**FACT:** A percentage of any class of first year students will be able and unable to meet the standards of any given program and graduate. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students are successfully completing demanding academic health science programs once provided with equal access to academic content and ways of demonstrating knowledge and skills.

“All I expect is an equal playing field. William and I plan to join a medical staff as competent members of a stellar team. I want nothing special beyond an equal opportunity to learn the material and demonstrate my competencies against the same educational ‘bar’ as my fellow classmates.” - Tara

**MYTH:** Deaf and hard-of-hearing students are at a higher risk for issues related to patient safety.

**FACT:** All students entering a health science program pose a threat to patient safety until provided with the knowledge, clinical training and opportunity to demonstrate their acquired professional skills. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students are no exception. Deaf medical professionals currently working in our health care system are practicing with a toolbox full of proven methods of ensuring patient safety.

“We did our research prior to selecting these areas of study. Deaf professionals have gone before me & are safely working on medical teams across the country. I will be expected to rise to above average in everything. This will be nothing new in my life. It will not be my deafness but others’ attitude & beliefs about my deafness that will challenge my every step.” - William