History and Meaning
Commemorating workers with disabilities goes back to 1945 when Congress declared the first week of October as “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” By 1988, the commemoration spanned the entire month of October with its name changed to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.” Ever since, employers around the country celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month to recognize the many contributions of employees within the spectrum of physical and mental abilities, and accentuate the value of a diverse workforce that is inclusive of the skills and talents of all employees.

What to Say and How to Say It?
Words and concepts describing people living with disabilities have their own histories and implications. People with disabilities want to be recognized as individuals first and not be defined by a disease or condition. This is the “person-first” concept putting the word “person” before “disability.” One term that generally has positive connotations refers to “differently abled” individuals – phrasing that avoids the implications that persons with disabilities are less abled. However, some members of the disability culture may view such terms as euphemistic. In summary, it is best to avoid terms that demean individuals and undermine their worth, such as “impairment” and “handicap.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990, makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against a qualified individual with a disability. It is important to note that the law also protects individuals who had a disability in the past, and those who do not have a documented disability but are regarded as having one. For example, a hiring manager may not refuse to hire an applicant because it seems that the applicant has a learning disability, even if the applicant does not have a documented medical condition.

Johns Hopkins Office of Organizational Equity (OE)
Organizational Equity (OE) supports and advances the core values of diversity and inclusion and the organization’s commitment to provide equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants. OE, as part of the Johns Hopkins Health System is available to provide consultation and guidance on matters concerning the ADA and reasonable accommodations in the workplace. OE works closely with HR professionals, managers and supervisors to help them become familiar with laws and policies governing equal employment opportunity and their responsibilities in responding to requests for accommodations. As an organization, OE believes that it is what people can do that matters and by exploring accommodations in the workplace, an employee with disability can continue to contribute to the success of the health system.

What is a reasonable accommodation?
According to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a reasonable accommodation is “any modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice, or work environment that makes it possible for a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.” Examples of reasonable accommodations may include acquiring or modifying equipment or devices; modifying training materials; making facilities readily accessible; modifying work schedules; and/or reassignment to a vacant position.
Facts & Figures

In 2015 there were nearly 40 million Americans living with a disability, representing 12.6% of the civilian non-institutionalized population.

Older Americans are more likely to have a disability

Johns Hopkins Health System
As disabilities can be both visible and hidden, current and past, it is nearly impossible to estimate the number or percent of Johns Hopkins Health System employees that fit now or at some point fit the definition of having a disability. However, in 2016 the Johns Hopkins Health System’s Organizational Equity Office handled 448 ADA-related requests for accommodations from 441 individuals.

American Indian/Alaskan Native are more likely to have a disability than any other ethnic/racial minority group

Labor Force Participation of Persons with Disabilities*

As baby boomers retire and people live longer, the need for skilled workers in the US, especially in the health care sector, is intensifying yet, individuals with disabilities are largely untapped in the workforce.

People living with a disability are:

- Less likely to be employed
- Twice more likely to report unemployment
- Likely to earn less

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who report living with a disability</th>
<th>People not reporting living with a disability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="People icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="People icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>75+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likely to earn less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When employed, more likely to be self-employed, part-time or concentrated in service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pertains to civilian, non-institutionalized population over 16

Sources

Resources
- Aid for Maryland Seniors with Disability – 211 http://211md.org/211provider-md-additional-services
- Employment First Employment for All http://apse.org/resources/resources-for-individuals-and-job-seekers/
- Housing Resources for Individuals with Disabilities – Baltimore County https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/disabilities/housingresources.html