

# LOS ANGELES GENERAL MEDICAL CENTER POLICY

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Subject: <b>INTERPRETER SERVICES</b>	Original Issue Date: 10/20/08	Policy # <b>226</b>
	Supersedes: 09/22/22	Effective Date: 11/20/23
Policy Owner(s): Admin. for Interpreter Services Executive Sponsor(s): Chief, Community Engagement and Equity Officer		
Departments Consulted: Office of Human Resources Patient Access Center Department of Nursing Office of Regulatory Affairs Medical Center Administration	Reviewed & approved by: Attending Staff Association Executive Committee Senior Executive Officer	Approved by:  Chief Executive Officer   Chief Executive Officer

## PURPOSE

To ensure compliance with regulatory requirements that protect the patient's right to access basic health care when limited by language or hearing impairment.

## POLICY

The Los Angeles General Medical Center shall provide interpreter services when a patient is Limited English Proficient (LEP), non-English speaking or sign language services when a patient is hearing impaired. Interpreter Services are utilized as needed to assist in effective communication and are free of cost to the patients and/or their families. Interpreter Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## PROCEDURE

Los Angeles General Medical Center staff will identify the language of the LEP patient using one of the following methods, 1) Hospital Electronic Medical Record System (ORCHID), 2) "Point to Your Language" card, or 3) non-discrimination poster, or 4) patient can request interpreter services when they schedule their appointment or when they arrive to their appointment. The "preferred language for discussing health care" is collected and updated in the Electronic Medical Record System by registration staff and other staff performing patient registration. This information is located in the Patient Demographic section of the Electronic Medical Record and on the banner bar indicating if an interpreter is requested.

Hospital staff will use one of the following certified categories:

1. Use a Healthcare Interpreter Network (HCIN) Video Medical Interpreting Unit (VMI or Mobile iPad), dial ext. 9-3600 from any in-house phone to be connected to a certified health care interpreter
2. Call the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Department at (323) 409-5533 Mon-Fri 8AM-5PM to request an in-person certified health care interpreter for Spanish, Cantonese or Mandarin language, or to request an in-person interpreter in another language for a future appointment.
3. Use the DHS-approved Translation Services application for mobile phones.
4. Request assistance from a certified bilingual employee working in the immediate area to interpret basic conversations (please see attached modalities doc.) It is strongly suggested

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that for those encounters involving medical interpretation of a patient's illness that you use one of options 1-3 (see above), to ensure accuracy of interpretation through nationally certified individuals.

When no local area certified bilingual employee is available, staff must use a certified bilingual employee from another area found on the bilingual bonus list that is annually updated and available for all staff to download from the intranet or by calling the Cultural & Linguistic Competence Department. The certified bilingual employees or certified sign language employees contacted may be asked to perform interpreter services in other areas. Release of these employees from their regular work duties shall receive clearance by their supervisor prior to providing interpreter services in other areas.

\*Three-way calls where the patient is at a remote location may be done by requesting Medical Center Operator assistance or by using the DHS-approved Translation Services application for mobile phones.

Certified Sign Language interpreters are available through the HCIN Video Medical Interpreting Units 24 hours a day, as well as over 200 other languages. To schedule an in-person Sign Language interpreter or in another language please contact the Cultural and Linguistic Department at (323) 409-8533 Mon-Fri 8:30AM-5PM

A patient is not required or expected to use family members or friends as interpreters. The use of a family member or friend may result in breach of confidentiality and /or reluctance of the patient to reveal personal information critical to the services being provided. It is the responsibility of the Medical Center to provide interpreter services. A family member or friend may be used only if specifically requested by the patient or in emergency circumstances. Refusal for an interpreter and the use of a family member or friend as interpreter shall be documented in the patient's medical record. Minors (18 years or younger) may not be used as interpreters.

Patients have a right to free timely interpreter services and every reasonable effort will be made to minimize wait for interpreter services. The goal is to provide interpreter services in 10 minutes or less.

The Cultural and Linguistic Competence Department is available for consultation and assistance during regular business hours by calling (323) 409- 5533.

### **ANNUAL SUBMISSION**

Los Angeles General Medical Center, Office of Regulatory Affairs shall submit on an annual basis policies and procedures to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Licensing and Certification. These policies and procedures shall provide a description of its efforts to ensure adequate and speedy communication between patients with language or communication barriers and staff.

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**226****NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**

Los Angeles General Medical Center, Language Services Department shall make the updated policy and a notice of availability of language assistance services available to the public on the hospital's Internet Web site on an annually basis. The notice shall be in English and in the other languages most commonly spoken in the hospital's service area.

**REFERENCES**

Bilingual Compensation, Los Angeles General Medical Center Policy 577  
 Bilingual Bonus Plan, DHS Policy 731  
 Translation of Written Material, Los Angeles General Medical Center Policy 111  
 Non-English and Limited English Proficiency, DHS Policy 318  
 California Health and Safety Code Section 1259 (c) (2), AB 389 (Chapter 327, Statutes of 2015)  
 Joint Commission Standards RI.01.01.03, RC.02.01.21  
 Executive Order 13166, President Clinton 2000  
 Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964  
 Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act  
 Hill-Burton Act of 1964

**REVISION DATES**

October 20, 2008; September 19, 2010; February 11, 2014; April 11, 2016; June 13, 2017;  
 October 22, 2019; September 22, 2022; November 20, 2023