

HARBOR-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR THE DEAF/HEARING /VISION/SPEECH/COGNITIVE IMPAIRED

POLICY NO. 128B

PURPOSE:

To ensure that patients who are deaf or have hearing and/or speech loss have linguistic access to American Sign Language interpreter services and/or auxiliary aids for other disabilities/impairments as appropriate.

POLICY:

Harbor-UCLA participates in the Health Care Interpreters Network (HCIN) which allows staff access to 24 hours/day, seven days/week to linguistic languages, including sign language services. Calls are routed immediately to Sign Language Interpreters through the Videoconferencing Medical Interpreting (VMI) unit.

Harbor-UCLA has other communication devices (such as pads, pocket talker etc.) to ensure the availability of interpreter services.

A patient is not required or expected to use family members or friends as interpreters, or to bring in their own personal devices to access our services. The use of a family member or friend may result in a breach of confidentiality and/or reluctance from the patient to reveal personal information critical to the services being provided. It is the responsibility of the Medical Center to provide these services at no cost to the patient or family member. A family member or friend may be used only if requested by the patient. If after being told that we offer these services and the patient insists in using a family member or friend as an interpreter, it must be documented in the patient’s medical record that the patient refused our service and is using such family member or friend as their interpreter.

Every effort shall be made by Harbor-UCLA Medical Center to provide reasonable accommodation as requested.

Minors (18 years or younger) may not be used as interpreters.

DEFINITIONS:

ASL: American Sign Language - A primary language of people who are deaf. It consists of a combination of hand movements and positions to express thoughts and phrases.

Communication Pad/Board: A writing pad/board used as a communication method when the patient has a speech or hearing impairment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/99

SUPERSEDES:

REVISED: 12/02, 3/09, 4/10, 5/12, 8/12, 10/15, 5/16, 2/17, 6/18

REVIEWED: 1/02, 12/02, 12/04, 6/10, 5/12, 10/15, 5/16, 2/17, 6/18

REVIEWED COMMITTEE: N/A

APPROVED BY:

Kim McKenzie, RN, MSN, CPHQ
Chief Executive Officer

Anish Mahajan, MD
Chief Medical Officer

Patricia Soltero Sanchez, RN, BSN, MAOM
Chief Nursing Officer

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HCIN: Health Care Interpreter Network - A network of shared hospital interpreters offering a range of languages, including American Sign Language, in video and telephone interpretation with service being provided by qualified and tested healthcare based staff interpreters.

Note: All services/devices used while at the hospital are free of charge for the patients with these disabilities.

PocketTalker: A device to amplify the voice for better understanding for the hard of hearing or speech impaired patient.

Tactile Interpreter: An interpreter who signs or fingerspells for the deaf person who may also be blind; while the deaf-blind patient follows the conversation by feeling the interpreter's hands.

TDD: A telecommunications device for the deaf - An electronic device for text communication used over a telephone line for use with persons with hearing or speech difficulties. Text is transmitted live, via telephone line to a compatible device.

TRS: Telecommunications Relay Services - Is an operator service that allows people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech disabled or deaf/blind to place calls on standard telephones via a keyboard or assistive device. The TRS operator can be reached by dialing 7-1-1; the caller must provide the deaf person's assistive device number or smartphone number. Likewise a deaf caller can use 7-1-1 to communicate with a doctor's office through a TRS operator. Originally designed to be connected through a TDD.

TTY: A teletypewriter/telecommunication devices used by the deaf person to type messages or communicate over the telephone, usually called a TDD.

Videoconferencing Medical Interpreting (VMI) machine: A telephone device used for voice interpreting and for American Sign Language.

Note: The Joint Commission recommends a mixture of low, medium, and high technical resources to provide augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) services, including writing pads, pictorial or communication boards, and visual pain scales.

PROCEDURE:**I. ACCESSING AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE SERVICES**

To access American Sign Language services, the following steps should be taken in the following order:

- If you are proficient in American Sign Language, communicate with the patient utilizing American Sign Language.
- If not:
 - Locate and utilize a Video Medical Interpreter (VMI) unit in your area and select choice # 2 on the VMI screen to access Sign Language services.
 - i. Harbor-UCLA utilizes remote access as the primary means for facilitating Sign Language services. The remote access system allows you to reach a qualified Sign Language Interpreter via the video device.
 - ii. Harbor-UCLA participates in the Health Care Interpreters Network (HCIN) which allows us access 24 hours/day, seven days/week to sign language services. Calls are routed immediately to Sign Language Interpreters through the VMI unit.

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II. USING THE VOICE AMPLIFIER FOR THE HARD OF HEARING

Harbor-UCLA facilitates the use of Voice Amplifiers by providing these devices in key areas of the hospital in order to serve patients with these speech communication impairments. These services are available for patients, family members, and hospital visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing. These pocketalker devices have been assigned to the Emergency Department (ED) Adult Triage area for Nursing and Business Office use, the PCDC Registration office, Room 108, the Clinical Social Work office, Room 1-N-1, and to the N-24 Outpatient Clinics; additional locations will be added as requested or as needed.

A Hard of Hearing patient is not required or expected to use family members or friends to relay the message being communicated to them. Patients may use their own devices to facilitate communication as a preference. However, it is the responsibility of the Medical Center to provide reasonable accommodation for these services, including the use of a writing pad if the patient or visitor is able to write and read.

Ask your supervisor or call the Language Center at extension 6557 for further assistance on how to locate an amplifier device.

III. SPECIAL REQUESTS

Special requests such as in-person sign language **or** tactile interpreter can be made by calling the Language Center, Monday through Friday at extension 6557. If there is a special need such as a future appointment after hour emergencies, power outage, the VMI is not operable or VMI screen is too small for a patient with vision or cognition condition, you may request for an in-person American Sign Language Interpreter **or** a Tactile Interpreter by visiting our intranet webpage under Language Center and clicking the link to completely fill out the ASL vendor form, then fax to (866) 399-4332; call the vendor at (800) 257-1783 to inquire about their availability. In the form include the following information:

- Patient's name
- Date and time an ASL interpreter is needed for
- The approximate amount of time the interpreter is needed; 2 hour minimum, per contract
- The exact location where the interpreter is needed
- Your name, phone number, and email; include a second staff involved in the request

Note: All efforts should be made to have the patient available when the ASL interpreter arrives, to maximize the interpreter's time.

IV. MEDICAL RECORD DOCUMENTATION

When a sign language interpreter is used, the patient care provider shall document in the patient's medical record the following:

- Name of interpreter
- His/her title
- When appropriate, his/her relation to the patient
- If a patient is hard of hearing, make a note of it, and document what method or device was used.

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V. TTY/TDD MACHINES

Teletypewriter/Telecommunication devices for the deaf/hearing impaired are available as listed below:

- A TTY/TDD machine is housed in the Emergency Department for deaf/hearing impaired patients to communicate with the Medical Center regarding hospital related activities, and 3 South for deaf/hearing impaired patients to leave messages to the hospital. The TTY/TDD phone number in the S/E ED is (310) 320-0815, in the PCDC 1st Floor (Adjacent Urgent Care Center) is (310) 212-5369, and for 3-South is (310) 328-2352.
- Public TTY/TDD machines/pay phones are located on the first floor of the following four locations:
 1. PCDC West entrance
 2. Main Hospital Building (Near Cafeteria entrance)
 3. S/E Building 1st floor (adjacent to the Information Desk)
 4. MFI Building 1st Floor (adjacent to suite 1300)

The patient or visitors can access Relay Services (to communicate with blind/deaf and hard of hearing persons) by calling “7-1-1” at no cost.

VI. TRAINING

To learn more about the use of the VMI or other devices, go to the Harbor Intranet, click Departments:

- Click the Language Center
 - [Quick Guide to Healthcare Interpreting POSTER](#)
- Or call (310) 222-6557 to schedule an in-service training
- Most devices have instructions.

REFERENCES

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

California Health and Safety Code Sections, 1259, 1367.8

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Joint Commission Standards

RI.01.01.01 The hospital respects, protects, and promotes patient rights.

- **EP 5** The hospital respects the patient’s right to and need for effective communication.

RI.01.01.03 The hospital respects the patient’s right to receive information in a manner he or she understands.

- **EP 1** The hospital provides information in a manner tailored to the patient’s age, language, and ability to understand.

- **EP 3** The hospital communicates with the patient who has vision, speech, hearing, or cognitive impairments in a manner that meets the patient’s needs. Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act

L.A. County Cultural and Linguistic Competency Standards

Hospital Policy #604C-Documenting Interpretation Services During Informed Consent Discussions