

## Interpreter Services

<b>Section:</b>	Risk Management		
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### PURPOSE

Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital (HMNH) has primary responsibility to provide interpreter services, when necessary, at no cost to patients/families that may require assistance with communication. The facility will inform non-English speaking patients, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) patients and sensory impaired patients of the availability of interpreter services and other available assistive communication devices upon hospital and Emergency Department admission.

### POLICY

#### A. Available Hospital Interpreter Services

1. Interpreter services should be used for non-English speaking and LEP patients in order to prevent the denial or delay of access to services or information that could have serious or life-threatening implications, and items that require patient decision-making.
2. The hospital provides patients with an interpreter to assist with communication during a patient's stay at no cost to the patient. The organization recommends and provides qualified and competent interpreter services whenever possible, however formal accreditation or certification is not required.
3. HMNH offers two methods of interpreter services: Video Remote Interpretation (VRI) and telephone interpreter services. The VRI method allows for video interpretation (of a live person via computer) of ten languages and American Sign Language. Several other spoken languages are offered via audio interpretation only. Telephone interpreter services may be accessed by dialing (661) 416-3791.

#### B. Patient Refusal of Hospital Interpreter Services

1. Patients and families should be informed that a qualified VRI interpreter or telephone interpreter is available at no cost to them and should be utilized when needed for effective communication.
2. Patient or family refusal of interpreter services should be documented in the medical record.
3. Friends or relatives of a patient may be used as an interpreter if requested by the patient and/or family.
4. If the patient or family insists on interpreting themselves, staff should attempt to get the family member's name that is interpreting and their relationship to the patient and document in the medical record.

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### C. Use of Clinical Staff as Interpreters

1. Clinical staff members may be utilized as interpreters if the patient and/or family requests, or in an emergency situation. The use of a clinical staff member as an interpreter should be documented in the patient's medical record. Documentation should include:
  - a. Patient's request or agreement to utilize a clinical staff member for language interpretation;
  - b. Patient was offered certified VRI and/or telephone interpreter services;
  - c. A short description or reason interpreter was used (e.g. consent, discharge planning, treatment, etc).
2. Clinical staff may be utilized to interpret routine patient care requests, and such communication does not require documentation in the medical record.

### D. Speech & Hearing Impaired

1. For hearing impaired patients, the patient/family should be consulted as to the preferred method, which may include:
  - a. Qualified sign language interpreter;
  - b. Lip-reading;
  - c. Handwritten notes;
  - d. Supplemental hearing devices;
  - e. Any combination of the above.
2. For hearing impaired patients, VRI should be utilized until arrangements can be made, with an outside agency, for a live interpreter according to patient need or family request. Contact the Administrative Nursing Supervisor with the request at extension 2999.
3. When a sign language interpreter is the preferred method of communication, the interpreter assists in communications between the patient and hospital staff in all situations where effective communication is necessary to ensure that the patient is receiving equal services and equal opportunity to participate in and to benefit from hospital services.

### E. Documentation

1. The Interpreter Services intervention should be utilized for documentation in the medical record when a patient has a "preferred" language other than English.
2. The VRI Interpreter Name and Translator ID number should be documented in the medical record.