

Interpreter Services

Section:	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 limited English proficiency patients and sensory impaired patients of the availability of interpreter services and other available assistive communication devices upon admission.

POLICY

Non-English speaking patients are provided an interpreter to assist. Formal accreditation or certification is not required however the organization recommends and provides qualified interpreter services whenever possible.

The preferred method of interpretation services for Limited English Proficiency and hearing impaired patients is video remote interpretation (“VRI”). Our current video system allows for video (live person on computer) for interpretation of 10 languages and American Sign Language. Several other spoken languages are available using the same system with audio only.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Patients:

1. Friends or relatives of a non English speaking patient should not be used as interpreters unless the patient specifically requests that they interpret. Patients/families should be told that a qualified interpreter will be engaged where needed for effective communication.
2. Patient (or family) refusal and the reason for refusing use of interpreter services shall be documented in the nurse notes. If patient/family insists on interpreting themselves, staff should attempt to get the family members name that is interpreting and their relationship to the patient and document in the nurse notes.
3. When a clinical staff member is utilized for interpreting, the staff member must document the following in the medical record:
 - A. Willingness to interpret for the patient in the required language;
 - B. Patient and/or physician were aware of the availability of professional interpreter service
 - C. Summary of what was interpreted (e.g. verbal discharge instructions from physician)

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Speech & Hearing Impaired:

1. If a sign language interpreter is needed, the patient/family should be consulted as to the preferred method of communication, which may include:
 - A. Use of qualified sign language interpreter;
 - B. Lip-reading;
 - C. Handwritten notes;
 - D. Supplemental hearing devices;
 - E. Any combination of the above.

2. 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 speech and/or hearing impaired patient is receiving equal services and equal opportunity to participate in and to benefit from hospital services.

For hearing impaired patients, arrangements can be made with agencies based on patient (or family) preference or request. Contact Quality/Risk Management at extension 1432 with the request.

PROCEDURE

1. Video interpretation laptop carts are available for patients needing these services as below:

Unit/Departments	Cart Location
Emergency Services Department	Emergency Services Department
Women's Unit, Nursery and NICU	Nursery
Med-Surg 1, 2 & 3	MS 2
Med-Surg 4 & 5, ARU & BHU	MS 4/5 – Supply Closet
Outpatient Services & Other Patient Care Services	Nursing Supervisor's Office

2. Each of the VRI laptop carts will be equipped with RFID (radiofrequency identification).
3. Each unit/department with a VRI laptop cart is responsible for designating a specific location for storage of the cart. The carts should remain plugged in when not in use.
4. Outpatient Services and other patient access areas (i.e.: Radiology, admitting, etc.) can request a VRI laptop cart from the Nursing Supervisor's office by calling extension 2999.
5. If more than one VRI laptop cart is needed for any reason on units with assigned carts, a request should be made to the Nursing Supervisor's office. Nursing Supervisor will maintain logging location, use and return of the additional VRI carts.
6. All carts will be cleaned in compliance with the appropriate Infection Control policies by the nursing staff.

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Isolation Patients:

1. A VRI laptop cart will be delivered to the room of the patient on isolation. The cart should remain in the room for the duration of isolation and/or admission.
2. Prior to removal, during the cleaning stage, the VRI laptop cart should be cleaned in compliance with appropriate Infection Control policies before being removed from the room and returned to the storage area for the unit.

Technical Issues:

In the event video/audio remote interpreter services are unavailable due to system issues (i.e.: network down, wifi not working, other system issues), staff may use the telephone for audio only interpreter services by calling (661) 347-2021. For hearing impaired patients, arrangements may be made through Quality & Risk Management at extension 1432 or by contacting the Administrative Supervisor at extension 2999.