



Policy & Procedure

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Revision #: 6

Owner: Administration

Authorized by: Policy and Benefits Committee

Language Assistance and Interpreter Services

APPLICATION

All Samaritan Health Services (SHS) employees.

POLICY

Samaritan Health Services will offer a means of effective communication with all persons presenting to the hospital and clinics for medical care, including persons with limited English proficiency, hearing, speech, or visual impairment. In accordance with regulatory requirements all communication aids and assistance are available free of charge.

PROCEDURE

DEFINITIONS:

1. Monolingual individual: A person who only speaks one language.
2. Bilingual individual: A person who speaks two languages fluently and speaks directly to a deaf or limited English-speaking individual without the use of an interpreter. Bilingual individuals do not act as interpreters.
3. Interpretation: The process of facilitating oral or sign language communication among two or more people who do not share a common language. Qualified interpreters are proficient in English, the target language, and medical terminology as well as trained in the standards and ethics of medical interpreting.
4. Qualified interpreter: A remote or onsite interpreter who adheres to interpreter ethics principles and client confidentiality, who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any specialized vocabulary, terminology and phraseology, and who have met the State mandated requirements.
5. Video relay interpreter: Interpreter services provided via live video feed. Available to all sites, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
6. On-site interpreter: Individuals who provide face-to-face, in-person interpreting services.
7. Telephone interpreter: Interpreter services are provided via telephones. Video interpreter: Services are provided remotely through an tablet, laptop or notebook.
8. Qualified translator: An individual with demonstrated proficiency in writing and understanding both written English and at least one other written non-English language, who adheres to rarely having to ask for paraphrasing or explanation.
9. Translation: The process of rendering a written text from one language into another that is contextually equivalent.
10. Vital Documents: Paper or electronic documents that contain information that is critical for accessing services. Examples include but not limited to informed consent forms, letters or notices that require a response from a patient, notices of eligibility, denial or loss of benefits.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Samaritan Health Services will maintain a Language Access Plan and a criteria matrix to provide staff with guidance and choice of interpreter modality.

Appropriate personnel will receive training and periodic refresher training in the use of translation technology and services.

The following resources are available to assist individuals with communication barriers who present to the hospital for medical care:

1. Sign language and foreign language interpreters available through contracted agencies by telephone interpretation, live video interpretation, or on-site interpretation.
2. TTY telephones and printed materials for individuals who are hearing impaired.
3. Reference materials to facilitate communication during medical emergencies.

The Health Equity specialist is a primary resource to assist SHS personnel. In addition, department manager, hospital supervisor, or clinic manager or their designee can be contacted to facilitate translation resource or address any concerns. (A complete listing of agency names, service provided, and contact information is located on SHS Insider/Departments/Interpreting.)

Medical Interpretation by Family and Friends

- 1.** Family members, friends and untrained bilingual individuals will not be used as interpreters except in rare or life-threatening circumstances or if specifically requested by the patient. SHS staff must offer to provide a free interpreter. SHS staff will consider issues of competency, confidentiality, conflict of interest, and privacy when honoring the patient's request. If SHS staff believes that any of these issues will be compromised by honoring the request, then SHS staff will provide a qualified interpreter.
- 2.** If patient refuses a free interpreter or request for use of an untrained interpreter, SHS staff will document in the patient record patient's refusal of medical interpreter services.

Limited English Proficiency

Upon determining that a person presenting for care has a limited English proficiency, the hospital staff or clinics will:

1. Identify the need for an interpreter;
2. Identify the language spoken by the patient; utilize copies of the language ID card in the unit to identify the language spoken;
3. Determine the appropriate method of providing interpretation;
4. Contact the interpreter service for the appropriate level of service required.
 - A. Video Relay Interpreter Services (7 days a week/24 hours a day)
 - B. Telephone Interpretation Services (7 days a week/24 hours a day)
 - C. On Site Interpreter Services (varies by site and language)

Speech or Hearing Impaired

Staff will identify the preferred communication mechanism for persons with Speech or Hearing Impairment upon presenting for care by:

1. Identifying the means of communication.
 - A. Use of a note pad
 - B. Lip reading by the patient
 - C. American Sign Language (ASL)
2. Identify the need for a sign language interpreter.
 - A. Sign language services are available through video relay to all campuses on a twenty-four hour per day, seven-day per week basis. See attachment for in-person resources.
 - B. Document in the patient's medical record the preferred method of communication.
3. Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service is a communications service that links deaf and hard of hearing people via telephone. To use this service, dial the appropriate number listed below. Give the agent the number to be called and he or she will stay on-line to relay the conversation. Talk directly with the person being called. All calls and information are confidential. This twenty-four-hour relay service is provided at no cost to callers. Long distance calls will be billed accordingly.

TDD/Voice	1-800-735-2900
AT&T Operator Service for TDD (24 hours)	1-800-855-1155

4. For hard of hearing patients, there is a resource information kit available. Provide access for this resource and assist with set-up devices if appropriate for individual needs.

Visually Impaired

Auxiliary aids may be used for persons with visual impairments, (i.e. staff readers, talking books, large print documents, etc.)

Translation Services

Vital documents will be translated by a certified translator and made available to patients.

Lines of business with additional regulatory requirements may include IHN-CCO or Samaritan Advantage Plans.

REFERENCES

- Addendum A – Language Services preferred vendor list
- Language Access Plan Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 80
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- NIAHO Accreditation Requirements, revision 18, 2-5-2018

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY

Date of Revision	Revision #	Revision / Review	Revision Description	Collaborated With (i.e. Standardization Committee, VP's, Quality, Risk)
Date Released	0	New		
12/4/2015	0-3	Revision	Archived	
12/4/2015	4	Revision	Updated Addendum	Compliance/PD
7/17/2017	5	Revision	Removed Addendum A and referenced location of contracted services available, title change from "Communicating effectively with Persons Who have Limited English Proficiency or Impaired hearing, Speech, or Vision"	Compliance
8/29/2018	6	Revision	Updated name; added language consistent with resources (video relay interpreter services) throughout; added definitions; updated and added additional references	Compliance, Legal, Health Plans
		Select		
		Select		
		Select		