

SOUTH COAST GLOBAL MEDICAL CENTER		
POLICY AND PROCEDURE		
Title:	INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR PATIENTS: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, DEAFNESS, SPEECH, HEARING IMPAIRMENT, VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND/OR BLINDNESS	
Manual:	Administrative	
Original Date: 12/89	Revised Date: 07/08, 06/11, 09/12, 05/14, 06/15, 6/16	Reviewed Date: 6/16

SCOPE - All Staff

PURPOSE

To provide a process that ensures maximum communication and services for all patients admitted to South Coast Global Medical Center (SCGMC) who are disabled due to hearing loss, sight loss, physically challenged, or lack the ability to communicate in English with the staff due to a language barrier, as indicated by American Disabilities Act.

To establish, develop, and implement a plan for the provision of culturally competent and effective communication for patients.

Notices advising patients and their families of the availability of interpreter services are posted in the emergency room, the admitting area, the entrance, and the in- and outpatients areas. These notices include a local address and telephone number to contact for registering complaints concerning interpreter services provided by the hospital. In addition, the language assistance policy and notice of availability of language assistance services is available on the hospital's internet website and the Orange County District California Department of Public Health website.

POLICY

- A. SCGMC respects the rights and needs of patients for effective communication and provides or assists the patient in the provision of interpretation (including translation) services as necessary.
- B. SCGMC endeavors to communicate information to patients in a comprehensible manner to insure informed consent, compliance, and to promote education.
- C. A patient's right to communication with visitors, telephone calls, etc. is respected. Should a situation such as the patient's medical condition require restriction of these rights, a full explanation is given to the patient and/or family.
- D. SCGMC is committed to providing interpreters to all patients who request them.
 - 1. Non-qualified clinical or administrative staff may not serve as a medical interpreter.

2. Family members and/or friends may not serve as a medical interpreter.
 3. Children under the age of 18 years may not provide communication services.
- E. Language assistance and interpreter services will be provided 24 hours/ 7 days a week at no cost to the patient.
- F. Patients are provided equal access and an equal opportunity to healthcare at SCGMC. Interpreter and special services will be provided for deaf/hearing impaired, blind, physically challenged, limited/non-English speaking patients and whenever a language or communication barrier exists.
- G. SCGMC will conduct a regular review of the language access needs of our patient population, as well as update and monitor the implementation of this policy and these procedures as necessary.

DEFINITIONS:

“Language or communication barriers” means:

With respect to spoken language, barriers that are experienced by individuals who are limited English speaking or non-English speaking individuals who speak the same primary language and who comprise at least 5 % of the population of the geographical area served by the hospital.

With respect to sign language, barriers that are experienced by individuals who are deaf and whose primary language is sign language.

“Interpreter” means someone fluent in English and in the necessary second language, who can accurately speak, read, and readily interpret the necessary second language, or a person who can accurately sign and read sign language. Interpreters must have the ability to translate the names of body parts and to describe competently symptoms and injuries in both languages. Interpreters may include members of the medical or professional staff.

PROCEDURE

- A. Hospital personnel shall assess the needs for communication services, including interpreter services to patients, family members, and visitors with limited English proficiency, deafness, speech, visual impairment, blindness, or hearing impairment and determine the patient’s preferred language for medical discussion.
1. Upon identification that any patient requires communication services for limited English proficiency, deafness, speech, visual impairment, blindness, or hearing impairment, hospital staff shall:
 - a. Obtain qualified interpreter services or appropriate equipment necessary to ensure that health care services are not compromised.
 2. Admitting:
 - a. During registration, patient’s preferred spoken language shall be noted on the admitting face sheet.

- i. Admitting personnel shall provide notification to the receiving unit/department of the patient's hearing and/or language limitations.

B. Limited English Proficiency

1. Foreign Language and American Sign Language Interpretation services shall be provided by approved vendor Language Interpretation Telephonic Services or Video Remote Services. If these services are ineffective or unavailable, staff may refer to the Qualified Employee Interpreters.
 - a. Language International Telephonic Services
 - i. Specially designed, blue, dual-handset telephones are available to facilitate translation process and are located in each nursing area and Staffing Office.
 - ii. Translation services can be used on any phone in the hospital system by dialing 3409 as well as through the hospital operator.
 - b. Video Remote Interpretation
 - i. iPads for video remote interpretations are located in the Staffing Office; available upon request.
 - c. Qualified Employee Interpreters/Contracted Vendors
 - i. Qualified interpreters shall be provided by qualified employee interpreters or contracted vendors who have met qualifications through language proficiency assessment, education, training, and experience.
 - ii. Qualified employee interpreters and/or contracted vendors shall be when telephone or video remote translation devices are not effective or available.
 - iii. A "List of Qualified Employee Interpreters" shall be available in the Staffing Office, Admitting and patient areas,
 1. "List of Qualified Employee Interpreters" shall be updated and maintained by Human Resources.
 2. Updated "List of Qualified Employees Interpreters will be given to Staffing Office to distribute to admitting and patient care areas.
 - d. Signage indicating interpretation services availability are posted in the admitting areas, emergency room, entrance, outpatient areas, and patient care departments.

C. Translation of Vital Documentations

1. Vital documents, including but not limited to, *waivers of rights, condition of services, patient's rights and responsibilities, consents to treatment forms, etc.*, shall be made available in translation for the major language groups served. When translation is not available for preferred spoken language, qualified interpreter services shall be utilized in efforts to translate the content of the documents to patient.

D. Deafness or Hearing Impairment

1. American Sign Language Interpretation services shall be provided by approved vendor Video Remote Services.
 - a. Video Remote Interpretation
 - i. iPads for video remote interpretations are located in the Staffing Office; available upon request.
 - b. Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TTY/TDD)
 - i. A text telephone that allow patients to type and read words to communicate over the telephone.
 - ii. Hospital staff shall:
 1. Notify hospital operator when (TTY/TDD) equipment is needed in a patient room such as:
 - a. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTY/TDD).
 - b. Amplified telephone.
 - c. Telephone ring/signaling device.
 - d. Closed caption television or closed caption decoder.
 - e. Communication should be notified as soon as patient is discharge so equipment can be removed and returned to Admitting – Communication Department.
 - c. Documentation in the electronic medical record or other means, based on the department/unit in which patient is deaf or hearing impaired.
 - d. Provide the patient with a pad and pen at bedside.
 - e. When an approved vendor is used for video remote translation.
 - f. Do not use the intercom system to speak into hearing impaired or deaf patient's room.

E. Visually Impaired/Blind Communication

1. Services are available for the visually impaired through the Regional Braille Institute.
2. The Braille Institute can be reached at 1(714) 821-5000. This may include signature guides, accessing the Braille Library (audiotape book), and information relating to visual impairments. The Braille Institute is committed to assisting people who are legally blind or visually impaired to help live with integrity in a world designed for sighted people.

H. **SERVICE ANIMALS FOR SIGHT/HEARING IMPAIRED, OR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED:**

For Service Animals, See Patient Care Services Manual, Service Animals for Patient/Visitor Policy.

I. **Annual Review**

This policy requires annual review. SCGMC shall annually transmit to the California Department of Public Health a copy of the updated policy and shall include a description of its efforts to ensure adequate and speedy communication

between patients with language or communication barriers and staff (as required AB Statutes of 2015).

J. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Appendix A: Instructions on Accessing – Language Interpretation Services
- B. Appendix B: TDD Phone for Deaf Communication
- C. Example of posting – Interpretation Services Notification