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Owner: *Barbara Berry: Program Mgr, Interpreter Svcs*
Policy Area: *Patient Care*
References:
Applicability: *Sutter Medical Center Sacramento*

Interpreter Services

POLICY

- A. Sutter Medical Center Sacramento (SMCS) will provide interpreter services at no cost to patients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, in order to enhance effective communication and ensure access to health care information and services in accordance with Federal, State and Local regulations, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, CLAS Standards of DHHS, California Health and Safety Code 1259, SB 1840, and Joint Commission accreditation standards.

PROCEDURE

- A. SMCS shall provide resources that facilitate accurate and timely communication for patients with LEP and sign language needs.
 1. Information regarding the availability of interpreter services will be posted at a minimum in all patient registration areas.
 2. The patient's primary language will be identified at the time of registration and documented in the patient's medical record.
 3. All communication related to admission and discharge (clinically-related), family conference(s), change(s) in patient condition or plan of care, and/or verification of informed consent and/or an advanced directive, requires the use of a certified interpreter. At SMCS a certified interpreter is defined as one of the following:
 - a. In-house staff interpreter through Interpreter Services
 - b. Certified bi-lingual staff member
 - c. Approved vendor interpreter
 4. Other considerations:
 - a. Use of a family member/friend instead of a certified interpreter may be used for non-clinical, non-technical information only.
 - i. No minors under the age of 15 may be used as interpreters at any time (California Assembly Bill 775).

- b. Any patient declination for use of a certified interpreter must be documented in the patient's medical record.
 - i. Exception: Verification of informed consent and/or an advanced directive requires the use of a certified interpreter.

B. Certified interpreters are available through the following services:

1. On-demand services (available 24/7):

- a. Dual handset telephones are available in most departments or by contacting Interpreter Services or the Nursing Supervisors. Dual handset telephones offer audio services only for LEP patients.
- b. Video Remote Interpreter Carts/Workstations on Wheels (WOWs) are available in select departments or by contacting either Interpreter Services or the Nursing Supervisors. Carts/WOWs offer certified interpreter video and audio services for LEP, deaf and hard of hearing patients.
- c. Video Remote Tablets are available in most departments or by contacting either Interpreter Services or the Nursing Supervisors. Tablets offer certified interpreter video and audio services for LEP patients only.

2. In-person services:

- a. In-house staff interpreters are available by contacting Interpreter Services or the Nursing Supervisors.
- b. Certified bi-lingual staff members are available by contacting Interpreter Services or the Nursing Supervisors.

3. For any issues obtaining the correct services for LEP, deaf and/or hard of hearing patients, contact Interpreter Services or the Nursing Supervisors.

- a. In rare cases, when all certified interpreter services (on-demand and in-person) have been evaluated and cannot meet the needs for a LEP, deaf, or hard of hearing patient, an English speaking family member may be used for interpretation. Use of an English speaking family member may be done only by the direction of Interpreter Services and/or Nursing Supervisors and it must be documented in the patient's medical record that all alternative interpreting resources/services have been exhausted.

4. Documentation

- a. Document any time an interpreter is used to include, at minimum, date, time, interpreter name and interpreter number, if applicable, and reason for interpreting services in the patient's medical record.

REFERENCES

Language access for LEP individuals is mandated by federal, state and local laws, as language access is "a civil right and one of the key paths to meaningful participation in a democracy" The Civil Rights Act, Title VI (Federal, 1964), Executive Order 13166 (Federal, 2000), Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (1973, California) and local ordinances.

Assembly Bill (AB) 775 prohibits the use of children under the age of 15 as interpreters in hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices.

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Attachments:

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Board	Maureen Andreetta: Coord, Medical Staff	8/9/2019
MEC	Maureen Andreetta: Coord, Medical Staff	7/23/2019
CNE	Debora Cale: CNE, SMCS	7/1/2019
	Mary Swimley: Dir, Patient Experience	6/24/2019

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