INOVAFAIR OAKS HOSPITAL
Policy/Procedure
Subject: Hospital Language Services
Policy #: 1520

STATEMENT:
Patients may be admitted to the hospital or seek service from the Emergency Department who do not speak English as their primary language. Accommodations will be made to provide an interpreter for them.

GUIDELINES:
A. Every effort will be made to provide equal access to service in clinical and administrative settings for all persons regardless of their ability to communicate in spoken English. Bilingual staff members who have been trained to serve as interpreters for patients will serve as the first choice to interpret medical information. A staff interpreter from the Inova Interpreter Language Bank may be contacted by calling the Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Operator at extension 3600.

B. When a staff interpreter is not available, the Language Line phone service or the Northern Virginia Area Health Education Center (AHEC) will be contacted. AHEC usually requires 48 hours notice but will try to fulfill short notice requests by faxing the request form to 703 549 7002.

C. Sign Language Associates (SLA) provide sign language, cued speech, oral and tactile interpreting services. This service is provided to facilitate communication with Inova Fair Oaks Hospital departments on an as needed basis. Certified interpreters for the deaf and hearing impaired available upon request from Sign Language Associates.

D. Language Line Services is the company which provides certified foreign translation for medical interpreting 24 hours a day, seven days a week for 22 languages. Current Languages available for medical interpretation are: Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Croatian, Farsi, French, German, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Language Line Interpreters are all professional, providing quality telephone interpretation and are bound by a strict code of conduct, ensuring that all information pertaining to the conversation remains strictly confidential.

E. Interpretation services can be accessed by using a Language Line Services phone. The phone is either a simple analog set with two handsets attached; one for staff and one for the patient; that easily plugs into the patient phone jack located in each patient room, or a wireless phone unit with two wireless phones. The phone is pre-programmed with the 800 line that dials the Interpreter service and will be pre-programmed with our account number,
thus eliminating the need for staff to remember these numbers. If there is not a phone available, the Interpreter service can be accessed by using the informational cards provided.

**Language Line Services:** To access an interpreter please do the following:

1. **Dial the interpreter network number at 1-800-752-6096** (or the specific number on your Language Line card).

2. An automated greeting will be heard, “Thank you for calling Language Line Services. If you need an interpreter now, please press 1”. Please enter your six-digit client ID”.

**Enter your account ID number:** the Inova Fair Oaks Hospital client ID is **222336**.

3. Next, you will be prompted to enter the individual department ID, which would be “130” for Inova Fair Oaks Hospital and then your three digit department number.

4. You will begin to hear the language selection prompts which will direct you to your interpreter session.

5. When connected to the Interpreter, introduce yourself and give a brief explanation of the reason for your call. This will help the interpreter understand the situation and enable them to assist you more effectively.

6. When you are finished with the conversation, hang up.

**If you are having any difficulty accessing the system, Customer Service** is available via the Language Line at 1-800-752-6096

7. In situations where non-clinical, non-sensitive factual information needs to be received from or given to a patient, the use of bilingual employees, family or friends may be appropriate, if available.

8. To assure accurate medical information is being relayed from caregiver to patient, the patient’s family or friends should not interpret clinical and sensitive information.

9. **SIGN LANGUAGE SERVICES:** Sign Language Associates offers three services:

   1. Non-Emergency Services which are defined as those requests which are received by SLA with a minimum of two (2) business days between the time of request and the time designated for the translation to occur.

   2. Emergency Services which are defined as those requests received by SLA within 0-24 hours.
      Note: Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. SLA interpreters are expected to arrive at the designated area not later than 2 hours after the request is placed.

   3. BabyWatch is an "on call" sign language translator service planned in advance for expectant parents with hearing disabilities.
Note: The Patient Representative Department will pay the charges incurred. Your department will not be charged. If the patient chooses to use his/her own interpreter, charges will also be paid upon request if they are the same or less than the equivalent charge for an SLA interpreter.

10. **Sign Language Requests:**

Requests for sign language translator services should be made directly to Sign Language Associates (SLA) at (301) 946-9710 Monday to Friday from 8 am to 5 pm; all other times dial (301)-946-9720.

A. The following information must be given when requesting a sign language translator:

- date, time and duration of assignment
- location (room number, floor, building) of the assignment
- special information pertinent to the appropriate placement of an interpreter (e.g., topic of discussion, medical procedure to be performed, communication preference of the patient)
- name of hearing impaired patient when possible
- name of contact person in area
- attached is a copy of a fax that can be sent to SLA

B. **Evenings, Nights, Weekends, Holiday Hours, or Emergencies**

- The SLA Emergency Coordinator will dispatch an on-call interpreter and response should be within 1-2 hours. This network is staffed 24 hours a day.
- Will contact hospital employee to confirm request.
- At the time, the hospital employee will provide the following information to the Sign Language Associates emergency administrator:
  - date, time, and duration of assignment
  - name of hospital
  - location (street address, building, floor, room number) of the assignment
  - name and phone number of an on-site contact person
  - special information pertinent to the appropriate placement of interpreter (e.g., topic of discussion/speech, medical procedure to be performed, communication preference of the patient)
  - name(s) of hearing impaired patient(s) when possible
  - they may also send a fax with the necessary information

C. The Sign Language Associates administrator will notify the hospital employee when a sign language interpreter has been assigned and will provide an estimate of when he/she feels the interpreter will arrive at the hospital.
D. Registering a Deaf or Hearing Impaired Patient with the BabyWatch Program

1. Patients wishing to participate in the BabyWatch program should be encouraged to call Sign Language Associates from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at (301) 946-9710 and ask for the Baby Watch coordinator. A letter will be sent by Sign Language Associates to the Department of Patient Relations confirming that arrangements have been finalized with the patient.

2. The following information must be provided to SLA BabyWatch Coordinator:
   - patient’s name and name of husband or significant other;
   - patient’s telephone number;
   - expected due date.

11. Documentation

The need and response for all translator services - both non-English speaking and hearing impaired individuals - should be documented in the patient’s chart and patient relations notified. When a translator is used for clinical purposes, it will be recorded in the nursing notes, and the translator will be identified by full name and, where applicable, position.