Language Services: The Why and the How
January 2015
Objectives

When this course is complete, you should be able to:

• Recognize the importance of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services
• Explain the role of the patient and companion in determining what services are required for effective communication
• Identify the laws governing language services
• Explain how to access spoken language interpreter services at Inova
• Explain how to arrange for sign language interpreters and/or auxiliary aids at Inova
ATTENTION!

• PLEASE NOTE: Use of related *Epic work flows will be taught separately* at each OU or other entity and to the appropriate staff under Epic training.

• **Documentation of language services is imperative.**

• Ensure you are familiar with your unit’s protocol for documenting communication needs.
Vision:
• A community where all residents have access to resources that promote and sustain health and well being.

Mission:
• To create a community where
  • systemic and avoidable health disparities are steadily reduced, so that the gap between the best and worst off is narrowed;
  • all residents have equitable access to a full range of high-quality healthcare and support;
  • all have equal opportunities for optimal health and well being
Selected Office of Health Equity Programs and Services

- **Language Services**
  - Spoken language interpretation
  - Sign language interpretation and the provision of other services for the deaf or hard of hearing
  - Translation of vital documents

- **Training and Education**
  - Diversity, Cultural Competence and Health Equity Education
  - 21st Century Leadership Development Program
  - Now We’re Talking! Bi-lingual staff interpreter training
Effective communication supports patient centered, safe, high quality care

- Effective communication requires that information is **understood by all parties** involved in care

AND

- Understood thoroughly enough that the parties can use or act on information exchanged

**Who determines what constitutes effective communication?**

- The **patient and companion** determine this.

- We are not in a position to tell them what they need for effective communication.--**They must tell us.**
• Patient centered care is by definition culturally and linguistically appropriate

• It is deeply respectful of patient and family values, beliefs and traditions

• This is true for all patients regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, education, religion, socio-economic status, language spoken, etc.
Any patient and/or companion who is limited English proficient or deaf or hard of hearing **must** be offered interpreter services or auxiliary aids **free of charge**

Interpreter services must be provided by **trained, qualified** interpreters.

**Friends and family** may not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by the patient and charted accordingly.

**Minor children** should **never** be used as interpreters.

In an **extreme emergency**, provide any necessary and appropriate medical treatment and use your best efforts to provide the most effective communication possible until the interpreter arrives.

Complete Policies (9-17-1 for Spoken Languages and 9-18-1 for Sign Language) can be found on InovaNet.
Spoken Language:
Your Responsibilities
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

- Language is considered a proxy for national origin.
- We must provide the same quality care regardless of language spoken.
- Patient’s language cannot be a barrier to equal access to Inova services and programs.
• **Trained medical interpreters** must be provided to our Limited English proficient patients **at no cost to the patient**

• **Vital documents** must be translated and communicated in the patient’s language, including:
  
  • application and enrollment forms
  
  • letters or notices regarding eligibility or changes in benefits
  
  • Information and education materials regarding patient’s medical condition and services available
  
  • anything requiring a response
  
  • patient consent forms
  
  • documents of a legal or financial nature
All Patients must be asked their language preference

- The question to ask is: “In what language do you prefer to talk with your doctors or nurses?”
- Rely on what the patient or companion tells you regarding his or her English language skills in deciding whether an interpreter is needed
- Document the patient’s language preference in Epic under Demographics, including
  - Refusal of service despite language needs, and
  - Emergency situations that require the start of care before a trained interpreter arrives
Secure Interpreter Services

If a patient or companion indicates a Spanish language preference

Spanish Staff Interpreters

- Inova staff interpreters in Spanish are available on all Inova hospital campuses

- A complete list with hours of coverage and phone numbers can be found on InovaNet: http://inovanet.net.inova.org/?id=1615&sid=1

- Call the appropriate extension to obtain a staff interpreter at your location
If patient or companion prefers a language other than English

Services are available at ALL Inova facilities in multiple languages:

- **Volunteer Interpreters** who have completed 40-hour medical interpreter training.
  - Search “Language Bank” on InovaNet
  - Over 600 volunteer interpreters in 45 languages
- **Telephonic Interpretation (Interpreter phones)**
  - Available 24/7 in 170 languages
  - For description of telephonic services, see
    http://inovanet.net.inova.org/upload/docs/IHS%20Departments/OHE/2014%20Interpreter%20Phone%20Deployment.pdf
Pre-scheduled on-site interpreter services are available at ALL Inova hospitals and in **multiple languages** on a limited basis.

- **To pre-schedule** an on-site interpreter, access the “Inova Interpreter Request” on InovaNet

- If the request requires an immediate response, use the Language Bank, the interpreter phones or call the Scheduler at 703-776-7641 (Option 2)

Inova Interpreter Request
https://wlccapps.net.inova.org/langreq/LangRequest/LangRequest.html

In-person Vendor Criteria
Services for
Deaf
or Hard of Hearing:
Your Responsibilities
Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

No individual may be discriminated against in the full and equal enjoyment of goods, services, facilities, privileges and accommodations in privately operated commercial facilities that are open to the public.

- ADA ensures **equal access** to goods and services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing
- ADA requires we provide **effective communication** and **appropriate auxiliary aids and services** (including qualified interpreters) when necessary to ensure effective communication for patients with disabilities
- **We must identify and assist 100% of our patients and companions who are deaf or hard of hearing**
Requests for service are guided by the patient or companion preferences.

Never try to dissuade a patient or companion from requesting a specific service or aid.
Deaf/HoH Patient and/or Companion Identifier

- Any patient or companion who is deaf or hard of hearing must **be offered a visual identifier.**
- Use **orange wrist bands** for this purpose.
  - Patient or companion is deaf: Use the band with the symbol indicating deafness.
  - Patient or companion is hard of hearing: Use the band that has “HOH.”
In a public area:

• If you are approached by an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing in a public area, help the patient or companion locate appropriate staff to assist in obtaining services.

• Examples of how you may help include:
  
  • Accompany the patient or companion to an appropriate unit in the hospital (for example, the assigned unit or registration)
  
  • Locate clinical or registration staff, etc., who may be able to assist
  
  • Locate a Video Remote Interpreting device (called InDemand) to help communicate
  
  • Exchange written notes, if appropriate, to answer immediate questions (for example, to provide directions)

Rely on one another!
Video Remote Interpreting or VRI

- VRI, marketed as InDemand, may be used to provide Sign Language interpreting either:
  - For the entire visit when acceptable to the patient or companion, or
  - Until a requested on-site interpreter arrives
- InDemand devices have been distributed to areas of greatest need for American Sign Language (ASL).
- They are located at all Inova hospital EDs, L&D units, and most main registration points, and are available through the Nurse Administrator to float
- They are also located at all HealthPlexes, ECCs, and UCCs
- See InovaNet for specific locations and key contacts http://inovanet.net.inova.org/upload/docs/IHS%20Departments/OHE/InDemand%20Contact%20List.100914.pdf
- Please note: While spoken language interpreting is available on InDemand, use of these devices should be prioritized for the deaf and hard of hearing
Within 15 minutes of a patient or companion request for an on-site interpreter:

- **Call 703-776-7641 to obtain a Sign Language Interpreter**
  - System-wide phone number
  - Answered 24/7/365
  - Use for scheduled and emergent needs
- **Use VRI (InDemand) until the requested on-site interpreter arrives**
Requests for aids or VRI should be addressed immediately:

These devices are available free of charge

- Video Remote Interpreters (InDemand)
- TTY’s
- Pocketalkers and Poseys (sound amplifiers best used for moderately hearing impaired people)
- Written Materials
- Telephone Handset Amplifiers
- Telephones compatible with hearing aids
- Virginia Relay Service -711
Until the Interpreter Arrives

• **Use InDemand (Video Remote Interpreting) where available**
  • In EDs, L&Ds and for check-out from Nurse Administrator
  • At Healthplexes, ECCs and UCCs

• **Communicate by writing notes**
  • Use multiple means of communicating
  • Chart all notes exchanged

• **Do not rely on lip reading**
  • Unless the patient insists it is his/her preferred method of communication

• **Document what you do!**
• **Document in Epic:**

  - All patient or companion requests for or refusals of service
  - Your response to such requests for or refusals of service
  - Any notes exchanged
  - Types of services or auxiliary aids used
  - Any unusual circumstances

*If it isn’t documented, it didn’t happen.*