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Owner **Melissa Norbury:
Manager,
Registration**
Policy Area **Administrative**
Applicability **Sutter Coast
Hospital**
References **Sutter Coast
Community
Clinic**

Language Assistance, 40.87

POLICY:

Sutter Coast Hospital (SCH) shall ensure participation of Limited English-Proficient (LEP) patients in the services and benefits it provides. LEP patients will be notified of their right to an interpreter.

Services are provided in any situation where communication is necessary. This includes the registration/admitting process, and inpatient and outpatient services. If the patient wishes to use their own interpreter, SCH must at least provide informed consent in a language the patient can understand. This means staff would need at a minimum to use the language line telephone or video remote interpreting service for informed consent and to have the patient appoint their own interpreter.

In general, children should NOT be used for interpretive services. Notices that advise patients and their families of the availability of interpreters, and the procedure for obtaining an interpreter will be posted in conspicuous locations (i.e., emergency room, admitting area, entrance area, in outpatient surgery, and imaging).

Patient communication options shall include:

- Sign language interpreters
- Assisted listening devices
- Telephonic language interpreters
- Video interpreters
- On-site language interpreters
- Translated written materials

DEFINITIONS:

Limited English-Proficient or (LEP):

A limited ability or inability to speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits the person to interact effectively with health care providers or social service agencies.

Interpreter:

An individual who mediates spoken or signed communication between people speaking different languages without adding, omitting, or distorting meaning or editorializing. The objective of the interpreter is for the complete transfer of the thought behind the utterance in one language into an utterance in a second language.

SUPPORTIVE DATA:

In compliance with the Health and Safety Code Section 1259, Title VI of the Civil Right Act, and other applicable state and federal codes, laws, rules, and regulations, SCH will provide interpretive services in order to facilitate equal and effective health care delivery. Telephonic interpretive services are available immediately 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

On-site staff can be available for interpretation for non-medical information ONLY.

When a contracted interpreter is the preferred method of communication, an interpreter may assist the patient and hospital staff in any situation in which effective communication is necessary:

- A. Obtaining the patient's medical history.
- B. Explaining diagnosis, treatment and prognosis of any illness.
- C. Explaining the need for "Advance Directive" information.
- D. Obtaining an informed consent for surgery or any invasive procedure (except when there is a medical emergency or the patient is unable to give consent).
- E. Communication during preparation for surgery and recovery after surgery
- F. Explaining prescribed medication, how and when they are to be taken and possible side effects.
- G. Obtaining permission for treatment decisions.
- H. Explaining patient follow-up care upon discharge from the facility.
 - I. Assisting registration, admission process
 - J. Discharge instructions

PROCEDURE:

A learning assessment is completed on patients during the admission process and a determination is made of their need for and type of language assistance and documented. Any member of the Interdisciplinary team may initiate interpreter services or access communication devices. The House

Supervisor or designee must make a request for such service to the Department Manager or Charge Nurse. Hospital staff may give translation of informal non-medical information.

A. Availability of Interpreter Services:

1. **For over-the-phone interpreter:** upon admission, admitting nurse is responsible to call Language Line Solutions® as primary vendor to arrange for an interpreter by phone.
 - a. Determine the language and dialect in which the patient is most conversant 1-844-944-2172
 - b. Language line phones are located on all inpatient care departments, diagnostic imaging, registration, laboratory, the ED, SCCC-FP, SCCC-OB, SCHC@BH, outpatient Wound Care Clinic and Infusion Therapy Center.

B. Language Services - offsite

1. Dial 1 (844) 944-2172
2. Enter your account # 201349
3. Please say the language you need
4. Select if you would like to add an additional person to the call
5. Hold temporarily as you are connected to an interpreter
6. Document the interpreter ID number in something patient-specific as proof of using a certified interpreter.

C. Equipment/Assistive Devices

1. **Tele Typewriter (TTY) Phone:** This phone allows for two-way communication for the deaf person. It allows for incoming and outgoing calls at the patient's bedside. A visual display allows for a written script of the conversation for the patient to review.
 - a. The patient should be placed close to the Nurses' Station, if possible.
 - b. The TTY phone should be hooked up at the patient's bedside.
 - i. Printed directions on use of the equipment is kept with the equipment.
 - ii. Refer to instructions for making and answering a TTY call.
 - c. Each of the following departments have a TDY phone: Admissions (fixed) and Facility Maintenance (mobile)
 - d. A TTY phone is available from PBX operator if an additional phone is needed.

D. For our patients that are deaf or have hearing impairment we have a Language Line Solutions Video Remote Interpretation (VRI) cart available twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week. This cart can be used for American Sign Language (ASL) and several other common languages if patients' preferences and needs would be best suited to video interpretation.

E. Bilingual employees (who have not been certified as translators) may be utilized to provide communication with LEP persons regarding basic instructions in activities of daily living or

obtaining demographic data. Employees of SCH will not be utilized as interpreters with respect to communication of information other than that stated above unless the employee has been determined to be fluent in English and in a second language, and can accurately speak, read, and competently interpret the necessary second language. Interpreters must have the ability to completely convert items and terms for medical terminology, body parts, signs, symptoms, and medical instructions to and from English and the interpreted language. Certification of this is required.

F. Translation of Written Materials

1. When necessary to ensure meaningful access to vital information, SCH will use its best efforts to provide timely, effective oral interpretation of vital documents that have not been translated into other languages.
2. If oral interpretation of written materials is provided, the staff member attending the patient must note the following on the form:
 - *"(In-Person Interpreter name or Language Line) has been read the foregoing document to (insert name of patient or patient's representative) in (identify language). (Patient or patient's representative) has acknowledged his/her agreement of the contents of the document by signing the document in my presence." The statement should then be signed and dated by the staff member.*

G. Refusal of Offered Interpreter Services

1. If the limited English proficient person declines the offer of interpreter services and instead requests that another person serve as his or her interpreter, SCH may use such other person as an interpreter if its staff reasonably feel that the person is willing and able to provide effective communication and that such provision of interpreter services are appropriate to the situation.
2. Any refusal of the offered interpreter services must be documented in the medical record. Such documentation must include the name of the person serving as an interpreter at the request of the patient or patient's representative, and his/her relationship to the patient or patient's representative.

DOCUMENTATION:

Document in the interpreter flowsheet, the use of a service/device and the patient's response. Include the use of an interpreter (identify if professional interpreter) and the content of the conversation in the patient's medical record.

REFERENCES:

Health and Safety Code Section 1259. Title VI of the Civil Right Act.

Cross reference Sutter Coast Hospital Policy #91.007: Patients/Visitors with Disabilities: Communication Assistance

All Revision Dates

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Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Board of Directors	Danielle Preston: Administrative Assistant III	10/5/2022
Document Review Team	Krystle Case: Administrative Assistant III	8/10/2022
Policy Owner	Melissa Norbury: Manager, Registration	8/2/2022

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