

Status **Active** PolicyStat ID **12492630**



Origination 9/1/1992  
Final 10/7/2022  
Approved  
Effective 10/7/2022  
Last Revised 10/7/2022  
Next Review 10/7/2023

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Director, Quality & Patient Safety (Acute)  
Policy Area Patient Rights & Ethics  
Applicability Sutter Solano Medical Center

## Language Assistance and Translation Services

### PURPOSE:

- A. To ensure that Limited English Proficient persons and persons with hearing or visual impairments have equal access as well as awareness as to possible options for all services offered by Sutter Solano Medical Center (SSMC).
- B. To meet State and Federal requirements for the provision of language assistance to all Limited English Proficient and hearing and visually impaired persons as necessary for effective communication in connection with treatment rendered by Sutter Solano Medical Center.

### POLICY:

It is the intent of SSMC to provide equal access to the services it provides, regardless of language abilities. SSMC will provide, at no cost to the patient, family member, or representative, language assistance to Limited English Proficient (LEP) and hearing and visually impaired persons as necessary for effective communication in connection with the treatment rendered; 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

Patient communication options shall include:

- Sign language interpreters
- Assisted listening devices
- Telephonic language interpreters
- Translated written materials

### SCOPE

- A. Hospital staff, physicians, patients, families and significant others.

# DEFINITIONS:

- A. Translation: Conversion of written text from one language to another.
- B. Interpretation: Conversion of words and meanings between spoken languages or between a spoken language and a sign language.
- C. LEP - Limited English Proficiency: Individuals who are "Limited English Proficient" cannot speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that permits them to effectively communicate with health care professionals.
- D. Language or communication barriers: Spoken language barriers are those experienced by individuals who are limited English-speaking or non-English Communication barriers are impediments experienced by individuals who are deaf and whose primary language is sign language, or those persons who have sight impairment.
- E. Patient appointed interpreter: An individual designated by the patient or family (when the patient lacks capacity to consent) to provide for language or sign language interpretation needs and has completed the form as outlined in section Procedure-B. of this policy.
- F. TTY/TDD: Telecommunications display devices or telecommunications devices for deaf person ( see appendix A for use instructions)

# PROCEDURE

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

Obtaining the patient's medical history

Explaining diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of any illness

Explaining the need for "Advance Directive" information

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)


Communication during preparation for surgery and recovery after surgery

Explaining prescribed medication, how and when they are to be taken and possible side effects

Obtaining permission for treatment decisions

Explaining patient follow up care upon discharge from the facility

## A. LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) patients:

1. Identify the language of the person for whom interpretive services are required
2. Offer Interpreter services available by phone
  - a. Interpreter Service via telephone: Contact Language Line 1-844-978-3365  and at the prompt say the name of the language you need. When the use of the interpreter service is concluded, staff should state "End of Call" and document the interpreters ID number in the patient's medical record as the source of translation.
3. Refusal of Language Line:
  - a. If patient request to use their family member or friend as an interpreter:

This method of utilizing an interpreter is NOT recommended, but can be utilized, only when the patient, after being informed of the availability of interpreter services at the hospital, chooses to use a family member or friend who volunteers to interpret or in an emergent situation. This option should be used in rare instances and should not be encouraged.

- b. The refusal of the patient to use the interpreter offered by the hospital, must be documented clearly in the medical record.
4. Patient Appointed Interpreter (or use of family members, companions, or minors): Use of family members, companions, or any minor as interpreters is discouraged, except for the most extraordinary circumstances, such as medical emergencies. Use of these individuals may violate patient confidentiality or may compromise care. However, the patient may choose to use non-certified adult family members or friends to interpret after they have been informed of their right to a hospital provided certified medical interpreter at no cost to them. In general, children under the age of 15 should NOT be used for interpretive services except in emergency situations, or at the patients' persistence as noted previously. At any time a hospital staff member/physician can supersede the patient's request and obtain a certified interpreter for patient communication when in the best interest of patient safety.
5. Refer to SSMC Policy-Patient/Visitors with Disabilities Communication Assistance for further guidance.

#### **B. For Document Translation**

1. Biotext
  - a. (415)751-9285

## **REFERENCES**

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC 12181, Title III. Office of Civil Rights, Department of Justice

California Health and Safety Code, §1259; Title 22; California Code of Regulations, Section 70721  
ADA Amendments Act of 2008

California Health care Association, Consent Manual, 2021. P 1.12-1.16, 1.19-1.25

Comprehensive accreditation manual for hospitals: the official handbook. (2022). Rights and Responsibilities. Oak brook Terrace, IL: The Joint Commission

## **APPENDIX A :**

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (TDD)**

**TDD 2700**

**QUICK START:**

**INSTALLATION PROCEDURES**

- Place TDD on table/desk near telephone and electrical outlet.
- Plug one end of AC charger/adaptor into jack to left of battery cover and other end into electrical outlet.

## USING KEYBOARD

- To turn TDD on, push top of **ON/OFF** switch; push the bottom to turn it off when done.
- Some keys contain two characters side by side. To use the second character, hold down **SHIFT**, and press desired key.

## THE DISPLAY SCREEN

- When TDD is turned on, the **POWER** light on left side of screen goes on, and the product identification appears.
- The screen displays one character line.
- When making calls, the **SIGNAL** light to the left of display screen shows sound this way:  
**Constant:** dial tone or connection with another TDD  
**Slow Blink:** telephone is ringing  
**Fast Blink:** telephone is busy  
**Flicker:** person or answering machine is talking into telephone
- All conversation appears in uppercase whether incoming or outgoing.
- If batteries are low, **POWER** light flickers.

## MAKING A CALL

- Turn TDD on, and place telephone handset in acoustic cups so that mouthpiece is to the left.
- When **SIGNAL** light shows dial tone, use telephone dial pad (not TDD) to dial number.
- If party answers by voice, press space bar a few times to signal that a TDD is being used.
- When you see receiving party's greeting, followed by **GA**, go ahead with conversation.
- When done conversing, type **SKSK**, turn TDD off, and hang up.

## ANSWERING A CALL

- When telephone rings, turn TDD on, and place telephone handset in acoustic cups so that mouthpiece is to the left.
- Type a greeting followed by **GA**.
- When you see the caller's response, go ahead with conversation>
- When done conversing, type **SKSK**, turn TDD off, and hand up.

## USING A PRINTER

- Remove battery cover, located between acoustic cups, from TDD.
- Plug one end of printer cable into **PRINTER** socket.
- Replace battery cover so cable fits through slot at base of cover when closed.
- Plug other end of cable into printer.

- Turn printer on, then turn TDD on.

## All Revision Dates

10/7/2022, 4/30/2021, 7/10/2019, 10/1/2015, 7/1/2011, 8/1/2006, 7/1/2004, 12/1/2003, 1/1/2001, 10/1/1998

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## Attachments

[b64\\_075d1945-5e4e-48e1-a194-d8450dff5e4](#)

[b64\\_7e7a7e70-d999-4589-bede-5f57d676c9d6](#)

[b64\\_ea77cb4a-cdf1-4b60-9b7a-0aa2bf15cec1](#)

## Approval Signatures

**Step Description**

**Approver**

**Date**

CNE/Administrative Designee  
Quality Department

Cami Bushey: CNE, SSMC  
Jessica Contreras: Director,  
Quality & Patient Safety (Acute)

10/7/2022  
10/6/2022