

TITLE: Effective Communication for Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Speech-Impaired Patients

There are two methods for obtaining certified sign language interpreters:

A- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Video Remote Interpreting-Deaf Talk which is available by contacting the communications department to have it brought to the patient's room.

B-American Sign Language Interpreters-call Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (NDHHS) at (603)224-1850 x250 to request an in-person interpreter. If it is an emergency occurring after business hours (5pm-8am Monday through Friday and 24hours on weekends and holidays) call the Emergency Medical Interpreter Services (EMIS) Program at 1 (866) 858-2677. The EMIS program will provide an interpreter within one hour of requesting services.

3. The services of an interpreter shall be provided at no cost to the patient (or the Deaf/Hard of Hearing or speech-impaired individual, as applicable). Exeter Hospital will pay a certified interpreter at a rate that is usual and customary, based on years' experience and level of certification for a two (2) hour minimum, which may be inclusive of any travel time, any travel time outside of the two-hour minimum, and mileage costs at the current federal mileage rate. Staff members shall leave interpreter information with the Department Manager, who will arrange for reimbursement. Interpreters shall forward invoice to the Accounts Payable Department.

4. **Basic Communication System and other Alternatives:**

Alternatives to interpreters may be used as long as they will provide an effective means of communication. While the final decision of whether to use an interpreter or another communication alternative is up to the health care practitioner, the patient's preference should be the principal factor considered. This means that a patient's request for an interpreter, rather than an alternative method of communication, should be honored in virtually all instances.

The following are some of the alternative communication methods available:

- A. The Speech and Language Department have provided Hospital staff with a Basic Communication System, which is available in the Emergency Department and in the Communications Department. Communication boards are available in the "Patient and Family Resource Guide" on each floor.
- B. Paper and Pen – Have paper and pen available to assist with communication.
- C. Portable Teletype - The Emergency Department and the Communications Department are equipped with a Telephone Typewriter for the deaf (TTY), which enables Deaf/Hard of Hearing-impaired people to call the Hospital. A patient care unit may provide TTY to patients by obtaining a TTY from the Communications department.
- D. Telephone Amplifiers - An amplified handset for use with bedside telephones, as well as with standard Hospital telephones, is available by contacting the Communication department.
- E. Personal Amplifier, i.e., "Pocket Talker" – An amplified assistive listening device that is available by contacting the Communication department. The headsets needed to utilize this device are the same ones available for use with televisions at the bedside and are available on all patient care units.
- F. Deaf Talk – stored within the Emergency Department provides access to sign language interpreters via computer screen. When these systems are no longer needed, i.e., the patient has been discharged; return them to the appropriate department.

DOCUMENTATION:

1. Document in the patient's medical record the Deaf/Hard of Hearing or Speech-Impaired individual's language/communication needs and the method used for effective communication for each interaction to(include the name of each of the interpreter(s), present in person or on deaf talk and for the period of time they were interpreting to include the nature of the communications.
2. If the Deaf/Hard of Hearing or speech-impaired individual requests family or other(to) to also interpret for them in addition to hospital provided interpretation services or refuses the services of either an interpreter or one of the alternatives forms of communication outlined above, document this within the patient's medical record, along with documentation of the efforts made to inform the Deaf/Hard of Hearing or Speech-Impaired individual or their representative of the right to such communication services free of charge to them.

REFERENCES:

Americans with Disabilities Act

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI

State of New Hampshire Directory of Interpreters / Translators and CART Providers

Available at: https://www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational/documents/interp_guide.pdf

CROSS REFERECES:

(RI).002 - Informed Consent / Informed Refusal

(RI).028 - Consent to Treat Minors

(PF).152 – Patient Instruction and Counseling for Discharge

PC-DOC.001 – Patient Assessment: Guidelines

FORMS:

849 – Hearing / Speech Communication Tool

<http://www.languageline.com/customer-service/support-tools/>