



- Hospital-Wide Manual**
- Department-Specific Manual**

Policy # AT01007
Manual Patient Care Services
Category 01 – Admitting Procedures

POLICY & PROCEDURE: INTERPRETERS / SERVICES FOR PATIENTS (DEAF, HEARING IMPAIRED, BLIND, HANDICAPPED, LIMITED / NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING, LANGUAGE OR COMMUNICATION BARRIERS)

POLICY SUMMARY:

It is the policy of Victor Valley Global Medical Center (VVGMC) to identify the needs for communicating with persons who are hearing and speaking impaired and persons using languages that are not readily understood and to specify the mechanics by how the source(s) will be accessed to interpret to patients, family members, visitors, and hospital/medical staff.

DEFINITIONS:

Interpreter – A person fluent in English and in the necessary second language who can accurately speak, read and readily interpret the necessary second language, or a person who can accurately sign and read sign language. Interpreters shall have the ability to translate the names of body parts and competently describe symptoms and injuries in both languages. Interpreters may include members of the medical or professional staff.

Language or Communication Barriers – With respect to spoken language, barriers that are experienced by individuals who are limited English speaking or non-English speaking. With respect to sign language, barriers that are experienced by individuals who are deaf and whose primary language is sign language.

REQUIREMENTS:

None

AFFECTED DEPARTMENTS/SERVICES:

Admitting, **Patient Care Services**

Effective Date: 6/06

Revision Date: 5/16



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PURPOSE:

- A.** To provide a process that ensures maximum communication and services for all patients admitted to VVGMC who are disabled due to hearing loss, sight loss, physically challenged, or lack the ability to communicate in English with the staff due to a language barrier, as indicated by the American Disabilities Act.
- B.** To establish, develop and implement a plan for the provision of culturally competent and effective communication for patients.
- C.** Notices advising patients and their families of the availability of interpreter services are posted in the Emergency Department, admitting area, main lobby, and outpatient areas.
 - 1. These notices include a local address and telephone number to contact for registering complaints concerning interpreter services provided by the hospital.
 - 2. In addition, the language assistance policy and a notice of availability of language assistance services shall be available on the hospital's website.
 - 3. Notices shall be in English and in the other languages most commonly spoken in the hospital's service area, but no more than five languages other than English.

POLICY:

- A.** VVGMC respects the rights and needs of patients for effective communication and provides or assists patients in the provision of interpretation (including translation) services as necessary.
 - 1. These services shall be designed to maximize efficient use of interpreters and minimize delays in providing interpreters to patients.
- B.** VVGMC endeavors to communicate information to patients in a comprehensible manner to ensure informed consent and compliance and to promote education.
- C.** A patient's right to communication with visitors, telephone calls, etc., shall be respected.
 - 1. A full explanation shall be given to the patient and/or family should a situation arise such as the patient's medical condition requires restriction of these rights.
- D.** VVGMC is committed to providing interpreters to all patients who request them.
 - 1. After a patient has been informed of the availability of the interpreter service, he/she may choose to use a family member or friend who volunteers to interpret.
- E.** Language assistance and interpreter services shall be provided 24/7 at no cost to the patient.

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- F.** All patients are provided equal access to healthcare at VVGMC.
 - 1. Interpreter and special services shall be provided for deaf / hearing impaired, blind, physically challenged, limited / non-English speaking patients and whenever a language or communication barrier exists.
- G.** VVGMC shall prepare and maintain a list of interpreters who have been identified as proficient in sign language and in the languages of the population of the geographical area serviced who have the ability to translate the names of body parts, injuries and symptoms, as needed.
- H.** Annual review:
 - 1. This policy shall be reviewed annually.
 - 2. A copy of the updated policy, along with a description of its efforts to ensure adequate and speedy communication between patients with language or communication barriers and staff (AB 389, 2015 Statute), shall be transmitted annually to the California Department of Public Health.

PROCEDURE:

- A.** Interpreters / Services for Patients:
 - 1. Language Interpretation Telephone Services:
 - a. Located at all nursing stations are blue phones (CyraCom) which are to be used for interpreting services.
 - i. A listing of the languages and their codes are available by each blue phone.
 - ii. The system allows the caller to add another caller at any time, not just at the initiation of the call.
 - b. It is the responsibility of the respective department needing interpreting services to ensure such services are contacted.
 - c. In an effort to effectively communicate with patients who are either hearing or speaking impaired or both, VVGMC utilizes the services of Accommodating Ideas:
 - i. Phone: (800) 257-1783
 - ii. Fax: (866) 399-4332
 - iii. Website: aiterps@ai-ada.com

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2. Admitting Department:
 - a. Patients shall be asked their primary spoken language (this includes sign language).
 - i. This information shall be noted on the admitting face sheet.
 - b. Deaf (this includes children of a hearing parent):
 - i. Notify the receiving unit / department of the patient's hearing and/or language limitation.
 - ii. Telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) system is available in the Emergency Department.
 - c. Hearing Impaired:
 - i. Speak slowly and clearly.
 - ii. Written communication may be utilized if this is acceptable to the patient.
3. Nursing:
 - a. Patients requiring interpreter services are identified by hospital staff, physician staff and/or family members.
 - i. The initial assessment form completed by nursing identifies language barriers and primary language needs of the patient.
 - b. Deaf or hearing impaired:
 - i. Notify the hospital operator when TDD equipment is needed in a patient room (e.g., TDD / TTY, amplified telephone, telephone ring / signaling device, closed caption television or closed caption decoder).
 - a) After patient has been discharged the phone shall be cleaned by Environmental Services staff and then nursing shall return the phone to the med room.
 - ii. Document in the electronic health record (EHR) that patient is deaf or hearing impaired.
 - iii. Provide patient with a pad and pen at bedside.
 - iv. If video remote translation is used through an approved vendor, document in the EHR date, time and what service was provided.

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- v. Do not use the intercom system to speak into a hearing impaired or deaf patient's room.
 - 4. Service Animals:
 - a. Patients, family and staff may access the hospital with their service animals [reference the policy *Animals in the Hospital: Animal Assisted Activities, Service Animals and Others* (SC02001)].
 - 5. Consent for Procedure / Treatment:
 - a. When translators are utilized for obtaining consent for a procedure / treatment, the translator shall be identified on the consent form with date of translation, signature (first initial, last name and classification) of the translator.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS: None

REFERENCES: Assembly Bill No. 389, Chapter 327. An act to amend Section 1259 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to health facilities. [Approved by Governor September 28, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2015.] Available at http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB389.

AUTHOR: Director of Admitting

EFFECTIVE DATE: 6/06

REVIEW DATE: 6/06, 6/09, 6/11, 7/12, 3/13, 1/14, 9/15, 5/16 - Every three years

REVISION: 5/09, 6/09, 5/16

APPROVED: 7/16

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment A – Language Interpretation Services [CyraCom (Blue Phone)]
Attachment B – TDD Phone for Deaf Communication
Attachment C – Interpretation Services Notification Poster

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