HOSPITAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Category: Patient and Volunteer Services
Title: INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING AND HEARING-IMPAIRED PATIENTS
Applicability: Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals
Contributors/Contributing Departments: Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer; Vice President, Patient Services, Methodist Campus; Director, Patient Services, Center City Campus

PURPOSE

Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals recognizes the patient’s right and need for effective communication. The Hospital therefore supports the needs of limited and non-English speaking patients, and deaf and hearing-impaired patients, who may require assistance in communicating with Hospital staff.

POLICY

The Patient Services Department at Center City and the Patient Representative at Methodist Hospital campus are primarily responsible to facilitate and coordinate access to foreign and sign language interpreter services, as well as ensuring the availability of auxiliary aids for patients needing such services. Family members should not be asked to act as interpreters. In addition, the use of hospital staff as interpreters is discouraged and should only be used when the use of professional healthcare interpreters cannot be provided.

The following services are available:

A. Foreign Languages

1. Telephone Translation Service: The use of an over-the-phone translation service provided through Cyracom International, is available 24 hours/7 days a week. Specially designed dual-handset telephones are available to facilitate the translation process. These phones have been placed on all inpatient nursing units, in the Emergency departments and in selected departments. Translation services are also available by direct dial to the Cyracom provider from any telephone within the hospital as well as through the Hospital Operator.

2. Face-to-Face Interpreter Service: The procurement of in-person language interpreters is primarily coordinated through the Patient Services Office at Center City and through the Patient Representative at Methodist Campus. Services are obtained on an as-needed basis.

B. Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Patients

1. Sign Language Interpreters: Sign language interpreters are generally obtained through the Deaf Hearing Communication Center (DHCC). Emergency services are available 24 hours a day. The procurement of a sign language interpreter for scheduled appointments and inpatient needs should be coordinated through the PSO in Center City and through the Patient Representative at Methodist.

2. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTY/TDD): A text telephone that allows people to type and read words to communicate over the telephone. A TTY machine is available through the Patient Services Department in Center City and through the Operator/Telecommunications at Methodist Campus. Additionally, a TTY machine is available in the Emergency Department at each campus. Patients may also access services through the PA Relay Service.

3. Amplified Telephone Receivers: All telephones at the Center City and Methodist Campuses have the ability to adjust volume. An additional amplification device is available at Center City campus through Telecommunications.
4. **Closed Caption Television:** All patient televisions at Center City and Methodist Campuses are equipped with closed-caption capability.

**PROCEDURE**

A. **Over the Phone Interpretation: Using the Blue Cyracom dual-handset phone:**
   1. Follow the prompts on the phone itself.

B. **Over the Phone Interpretation: Using ANY hospital phone:**
   1. Dial 1-800-481-3293
   2. Enter 9-digit account number: 501012882
   3. Enter 4-digit PIN Number: 2112
   4. Follow the voice prompts to select the language required.
   5. When the interpreter answers, give a brief explanation of the nature of the call.
   6. When finished with the call, hang up.

C. **Face-to-Face Language Interpreter:**
   1. To obtain an in-person Language Interpreter, contact the Patient Services Department at 5-7777 (Center City) or the Patient Representative for Methodist Campus at 952-9987.
   2. The more notice that can be provided about a specific need, the greater the success in procuring an interpreter.

D. **Sign Language Interpreter:**
   1. To obtain a Sign Language Interpreter, contact the Patient Services Department at 5-7777 (Center City) or the Patient Representative for Methodist Campus at 952-9987.
   2. The more notice that can be provided about a specific need, the greater the success in procuring an interpreter. It is preferable to provide a few business days notice to Patient Services or Patient Representative.
   3. The Emergency Departments at each campus can access DHCC directly (610-604-0452) with their need for emergency translation services.

E. **PA Relay Service:**
   1. The Relay System connects telephone calls between voice telephone users and teletypewriter (TTY) users. It enables telephone users and those who use relay services, but have speech or hearing difficulty, to communicate more efficiently.
   2. To make a relay call using a standard telephone:
      a. Dial 7-1-1. Follow the prompts. Give the operator the telephone number you are calling.
      b. Speak as if you were talking directly to the person you are calling. The operator places your call, types your spoken message and reads the TTY user’s message back to you.

F. **Amplified Telephones:**
   1. To obtain a telephone with special amplification capabilities at Center City campus, contact Telecommunications at 5-7975 (press 2).

**Question/Problem resolution**

Any questions or problems associated with the provision/availability of interpreter services should be directed to:

**For Center City:** Patient Services Department
1880 Gibbon Building
215-955-7777
Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM

**For Methodist Campus:** Patient Services Department
Administrative Suite, First floor
215-952-9987
Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 5 PM

After normal business hours and on weekends, contact a Nursing Supervisor.
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Responsibility for maintenance of policy: Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

(Signature on File)

Approved by:
Thomas J. Lewis
President and CEO, Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals