

INTERPRETER AND TDD, HEARING IMPAIRED SERVICES FOR PATIENTS WITH SPECIAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Beth Israel Lahey Health 
Winchester Hospital

POLICY: Interpreter and TDD (Hearing Impaired) Services for Patients with Special Communication Needs

Winchester Hospital will offer and provide interpreter services to any non-English / limited English speaking or hearing impaired patient who requires or requests an interpreter.

NOTE: In a medical emergency, a Medical or Hospital staff member should page Interpreter Services and use his/her best judgment to communicate in the fastest and most effective way given the situation and need not wait for an interpreter in person to arrive. Use of Video Remote Interpreting or Language Line, while waiting for an interpreter in person, is ideal.

Upon registration the patient is asked what language they prefer to receive their medical information.

Interpreter services are offered to patients or their substitute decision makers at no charge.

If the patient or substitute decision maker requests Interpreter services, the Medical/Hospital Staff will arrange for such services. Until Interpreter Services have been arranged and are available, staff will communicate with the patient through the language line.

Interpreter services should be arranged in advance if possible for appointments, planned treatments, elective procedures, informed consent, communication throughout hospitalization, etc.

Using family members or friends as Interpreters:

Hospital Staff **may** use family or friends for non-medical information, such as registration

Hospital staff **may not** require, suggest or encourage patients to use family members or friends as Interpreters for medical information

Minors (<18 years) are NOT to be used as Interpreters

Hospital staff may collect information from family and friends about family history but this **does not** substitute for provision of Interpreter Services which must be offered

If the patient explicitly declines Interpreter Services and requests a family member, Hospital staff will communicate to the patient that Interpreter Services are legally guaranteed and free of charge

If the patient declines services, Hospital staff will ensure the patient signs the Declination of Interpreter Services Form (found in the ECMS Care Forms Library)

Hospital staff still has the right to request the use of an interpreter to perform professional linguistic services for optimal communication **even if the patient declines interpreter services**

All staff will document in the patient's medical record: a) the use of interpreter services, b) if an interpreter is used, the name of the interpreter and language used, c) if applicable, the Declination of Interpreter Services form must be filed in the paper medical record.

If a staff member has any concerns, they should activate the chain of command

For information on how to access Interpreter Services, refer to policy #1523-CA. This policy can be found on Winchester Hospital's intranet site WinNet.

Video Remote Interpreting and Language Line shall only be used when it can be documented by Medical/Hospital staff that there is either no reasonable way to anticipate the need for contracted interpreters for a particular language, or there occurs in a particular instance an inability to provide competent interpreter services by a contracted interpreter.