

INTERPRETATION SERVICES

(COMMUNICATION FACILITATION FOR PATIENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (“LEP”) AND VISION AND/OR HEARING IMPAIRMENT)

Policy

It is the policy of The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary to comply with federal, state and city mandates to provide communication assistance to all patients who need it with the goal to improve patient care. Such services shall be available to inpatients and outpatients within 20 minutes, and to the Emergency Services patients within 10 minutes of a request by the patient, the patient’s family or representative, or the medical care provider. Emergency care will not be delayed while waiting for an interpreter.

Statement of Purpose

To make it easier for patient care providers and patients who are not fluent in English or are visually or hearing impaired to communicate with each other, it is the Infirmary’s policy to provide skilled interpreters and persons skilled in communicating with vision and/or hearing impaired individuals

Actions Taken to Comply with Department of Health Regulations effective in 2006:

To assure safe and appropriate care we have taken the following steps:

- 1. Appointment of a Language Assistance Program (LAP) Coordinator and LAP program specialist** who is responsible for the Infirmary’s language assistance services for LEP patients.
- 2. Timely Identification of the primary language spoken by our patient population at the first point of contact** and implementation of steps to target LEP patients with language assistance needs.

At each patient registration or admission site, there are cards from New York State Department of Health (DOH) which help identify 31 different languages assist the patient and the staff member determine what type of interpreter might be needed. If the employee cannot find the LEP patient’s Primary Language after using the identification card, s/he shall contact the telephone Language Line for assistance.

- 3. Notification to all patients that this is a free service** and how they can access these services.

4. Development of ongoing education and training for administrative, clinical and other employees with direct patient care contact about how to access the hospital's language assistance services on behalf of patients.

5. Passive notification of patients regarding their right to interpreter services. The Infirmary has posted Patients' Rights Posters in English, Spanish, Russian and Chinese in the main lobby at the 310 E. 14th St. entrance and Patients' Rights posters in 26 other public locations throughout our facilities. Another sign from DOH about availability of free language assistance services is in public entry locations including the front desk.

6. Written translation of key documents including financial forms and information, consent forms, advance directive information and other documents or forms requiring the patient's signature.

7. Rule against using family members, friends or non-hospital personnel as interpreters unless:

- a. the patient agrees to their use
- b. free interpreter services have been offered by the hospital and the patient does not agree to use these services. This is documented in medical record.
- c. there are emergency circumstances which require the use of individuals younger than 16 years of age and then ONLY after the family members, friends or non-hospital personnel issues of competency, confidentiality or conflicts of interest are taken into account. This shall also be documented in the medical record.

8. Management of skilled limited English proficiency interpreters and/or persons skilled in communicating with vision and/or hearing impaired individuals.

At the Infirmary resources consist of:

- a. bilingual skilled staff
- b. staff volunteers from the Infirmary's Language Bank
- c. skilled volunteer interpreters from the Infirmary's Office of Volunteer Services, all over the age of 16
- d. telephone interpretation

9. The Infirmary will complete an annual needs assessment based on information available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, hospital administrative

data, school system, data or other sources that will identify limited English speaking groups who make up more than 1% of the hospital's total patient base.

Other Communication Services

1. Hearing impaired patients will be provided with sign language interpreters for communication assistance.

Sign Talk America, a video interpreting service, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for use for patients requiring sign language interpretation.

Assistive Devices for the Hearing Impaired Individual are available for use by patients.

2. Visually impaired patients

a. staff will read aloud all forms provided to the patient

b. the Patients' Bill of Rights and the Notice of Privacy Practices available in Braille

3. Patients with mental and developmental disabilities

Reasonable accommodation will be provided for family members or a patient's representative to assist with the communication needs of patients with mental and developmental disabilities.

Conclusion

The Infirmary is committed to excellence and the proposition that QUALITY MATTERS and will provide appropriate, necessary language assistance for all patients who need it.