

OBJECTIVE

To provide guidelines for the provision of interpreters for Limited English Proficient (LEP), deaf, and hard-of-hearing patients.

SCOPE

All MCG Health, Inc. (MCGHI) workforce members, including employees, volunteers, medical staff members and housestaff are responsible for adhering to these guidelines in their interactions with patients, families and visitors or any individual who comes to the MCGHI facilities and patient care areas who may require Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS).

POLICY

MCGHI recognizes and supports the needs of LEP, deaf and hard-of-hearing patients who may require assistance in communicating with hospital and clinic staff. CLAS will facilitate medical interpreters and coordinate access to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and other foreign language services.

MCGHI workforce members are encouraged to obtain a trained interpreter for the encounter to ensure accurate interpretation. Family or friends of the LEP patient shall not be required, suggested, or used as interpreters. This will ensure complete, accurate, impartial, and confidential communication. The patient may choose to use a family member or friend as an interpreter after being informed of the availability of an MCGHI interpreter. Minor children may not be used as interpreters in any patient care encounter.

Documentation shall be included within the patient's medical record describing CLAS services provided and from what source the services were obtained. Patient refusal of MCGHI interpreter services shall also be documented in the patient's medical record.

The role of the medical interpreter is to facilitate communication between patients who speak different languages and MCGHI staff. The most basic role of the interpreter is to interpret everything that is said, exactly as it is said: add nothing, omit nothing, and change nothing.

PROVISIONS

Requesting CLAS Services

Spanish Medical Interpreters

1. Contact the CLAS department during business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm at 721-6929. After hours, holidays, and weekends contact the paging operator at 721-3893 or the on-line "On Call" system to access the interpreter on-call. You may be asked the following information:

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Revision Date: July 25, 2005

- a. Name and hospital number of patient
- b. Language required
- c. Location and room number
- d. Name of attending physician
- e. Name and phone number of staff requesting an interpreter
- f. A brief explanation of the medical concern
- g. An estimated length of time

Language other than Spanish

1. Contact the CLAS department during business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm at 721-6929 or the nursing house supervisor's office at 721-4740 for after hours, holidays and weekends to access language line services.
2. For emergency room patients (to include Adult, Pediatric and the L&D areas) contact the Charge Nurse to access the language line services in that area.

The following services are available for Limited English Proficient (LEP), deaf and hard-of-hearing patients

1. Language Line Services

- a. Spanish interpreters are on call 24/7, however, MCGHI has obtained a service contract for language line services. This service is to be used only as a supplemental system when an interpreter is needed immediately or when services are needed in an unusual or infrequently encountered language.

1. Access to this service is made through the CLAS department during normal duty hours at 721-6929. After hours, holidays, and weekends contact the nursing house supervisor's office at 721-4740.
2. The nursing house supervisor's office is responsible for maintaining a log for tracking requests made after hours for use of this service.

2. American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters

- a. Arrangements for this service must be made in advance, as emergency services are not usually available.
- b. American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters must be certified as required by Georgia Law 24-1-101.
- c. Interpreters must be capable of communicating the appropriate medical details and hospital policies correctly to enable a patient to make necessary decisions. For concerns of a specific nature (e.g. autopsy), a specialist from the appropriate

Effective Date: July 1, 2000

Revision Date: July 25, 2005

discipline should be contacted and, if desirable, be present during communication on that subject.

In situations involving informed consent or discharge teaching of a hearing impaired patient, patient and family resources shall be contacted to obtain interpreters from outside resources. If no interpreter for the hearing-impaired is available, a qualified interpreter should be made available.

3. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)

a. A TDD (or text telephone) is a device that allows persons to type and read words to communicate over the telephone instead of speaking and listening. There are no charges incurred for use of this device.

1. To obtain a TDD, contact the CLAS department during normal duty hours at 721-6929. After hours, holidays and weekends contact the nursing house supervisor's office at 721-4740.
2. CLAS department and the nursing house supervisor's office are responsible for maintaining a log for tracking equipment usage.

4. Amplified Telephone Receiver

a. An amplified telephone receiver is available through the nursing house supervisor's office at 721-4740.

5. Closed Caption Televisions

- a. The majority of televisions within the MCGHI Health System are equipped with closed-caption capability. Programming on these sets for closed-caption can be made available by calling the Electronic Maintenance Department at 721-3440.
- b. A portable television set with closed-caption capability can also be made available by calling the Electronic Maintenance Department.

RESPONSIBILITY

All MCGHI employees are responsible for adhering to these guidelines in every patient/family interaction.

The CLAS Department is administratively responsible for the upkeep of this policy

Approved _____



President/Chief Executive Officer
MCG Health, Inc.

July 25, 2005

Date

MCG Health, Inc.

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Subject: Interpreter, Provision of

Page 4 of 4

Revision 1

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