

Procedure



Procedure Title:	Interpretation Services	
Applies To:	All IWK employees, physicians and volunteers	
Location Applicability:	IWK Health	
Approved:	Effective:	Next Review:
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide clear guidelines for language interpretation services. IWK Health utilizes professional trained health interpreters to support the communication between patients and their families who are of low English proficiency (LEP), or non-English speaking, and IWK team members.

PROCEDURE

Note: Professional Trained Health Interpreters approved by IWK Health are available in three modalities: ***In-Person, Video, and Telephone***. Refer to [Language Services](#) on Pulse for the most up to date information on each modality.

IWK Health Team Members are responsible to:

1. Ask **ALL** patients/families during the intake and registration process their preferred language when receiving care.
 - 1.1 Document the preferred language during the intake and registration process.
2. Assess the language needs of patients/families on an ongoing basis throughout care, using the following approaches:
 - 2.1 Ask open ended questions to assess the patient's/family's ability to understand and communicate in English.
 - 2.2 Observe and explore what language the family speaks among themselves.
 - 2.3 Observe for nonverbal cues such as blank stares or constant nodding as this may indicate lack of understanding.
 - 2.3.1 Take into consideration and be respectful of cultural differences that may impact assessment of body language and level of understanding.
 - 2.4 Assess patients'/families' understanding of information provided by asking them to repeat back what was communicated.
3. Inform patients/families of the availability of the IWK approved professional trained health interpreters and of the various modalities. Offer to engage the services when it is identified by the patient/family or the Team Member that there is a language barrier.

- 3.1 This includes patients/families who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), as well as who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.
4. Inform LEP patients/families that it is their **right** to have access to interpretation and that there is no cost to the patient/family.
5. Arrange for the presence of an IWK approved professional trained health interpreter when requested by a patient/family or when it is identified by a team member that one is needed (by ongoing assessment) and agreed to by the patient/family.
 - 5.1 Situations in which Team Members should engage a Professional Trained Health Interpreter include but are not limited to the following:
 - 5.1.1 History taking, examination/assessment, and other intake procedures/discussions.
 - 5.1.2 Discussions/explanations of diagnosis, prognosis, treatment plan, care plan and/or related changes.
 - 5.1.3 Obtaining consent
 - 5.1.4 Patient/family conferences/meetings
 - 5.1.5 Education sessions
 - 5.1.6 Mental health encounters
 - 5.1.7 Discussions/explanations related to and performing treatment, procedures, and investigations, as well as any related equipment
 - 5.1.8 Palliative care and bereavement.
 - 5.1.9 Discussions surrounding advanced care plans and/or health care directives.
 - 5.1.10 Discussions/explanations related to participation in studies/research
 - 5.1.11 Giving medication instructions and/or explaining side effects
 - 5.1.12 Discharge planning/instructing/educating

5.1.13 Matters related to legal, finance, or insurance

6. Document the interpreter's name and/or identification number, date, time, and context of the session when utilizing any of IWK Health approved interpretation services, in accordance with [Minimum Documentation Standards](#).
7. Act as lead for the conversation and be responsible and accountable for the interaction with the patient/family. This includes but is not limited to providing explanation of written materials.
 - 7.1 Verify that the information delivered between patients/families and themselves is clear and understood to enable informed decisions about patient care. It is not the interpreter's role to determine if the patient/family understands, but to provide the language support so that patients/families and team members can contribute to a conversation as if they shared a language.
 - 7.2 Interpreters will only use their voice to provide professional, impartial, and confidential health interpretation complying within their standards of practice. It is not their role to provide translation (see definitions). In the presence of the team member, they may deliver sight translation. They cannot provide explanations. They cannot fill out forms on the behalf of the patient.
8. When patients/families refuse IWK interpretation services, IWK Health Team Members will:
 - 8.1 Explore the rationale
 - 8.2 Explain that the services are of no cost to the patient
 - 8.3 Reassure that IWK approved interpreters are bound to privacy and confidentiality agreements
 - 8.4 Explain that the use of Interpretation is best practice in order to provide safe, high-quality, person-centered care
 - 8.5 Inform the patient/family of all modalities available in case one is preferential
 - 8.6 Document the refusal, date, time, rational and actions taken

Note: IWK Health does not approve or support the use of family members or friends to act as Ad Hoc Interpreters.

9. When patients/families insist on using family members/friends, IWK Health Team Members will:
 - 9.1 Inform the patient/family of the risks associated to using a family member/friend as interpreters. Such risks include but are not limited to patient confidentiality, conflict of interest, omission of information, false information, editorialization, and substitution of information.
 - 9.2 Consider the risks outlined in point a when determining if it is appropriate to use a family member/friend if still insisted by the patient/family.
 - 9.3 Document the name and relationship of the family member or friend used as an interpreter,
 - 9.4 as well as the rationale for using the Ad Hoc interpreter.
10. File a SIMS (Safety Improvement & Management System) under Care Management (event type: interpretation/language/translation) if there are any incidents related to interpretation services in accordance [with Reporting, Management and Quality Review of Patient Safety Events Policy](#) #302.1).
 - 10.1 IWK team members should also encourage patients/families to contact the IWK feedback coordinator with any feedback or concerns related to interpretation services.

MATERIALS, RESOURCES AND OTHER PREREQUISITES

1. Professional Trained Health Interpreters approved by IWK Health are available in three modalities: ***In-Person, Video, and Telephone***. Refer to [Language Services](#) on Pulse for the most up to date information on each modality.

REFERENCES

Legislative Acts/References

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

(http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/Const_index.html)

French-language Services Act/Loi sur les services en français

(<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/frenchla.htm>)

French-language Services Regulations/Règlement sur les services en français

(<https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/flsregs.html>)

Other

IWK Patient Safety Vision <http://pulse.iwk.nshealth.ca/subsites/page/view/?id=13785>

IWK Position Statement on Diversity, Inclusion and Culturally Competent Care
(http://pulse.iwk.nshealth.ca/load_file.cfm?section=depserv&theFile=IWK001%2D1070%20Diversity%20Bilingual%2017x11%20R2%20X1A%2Epdf)

National Council on Interpreters in Healthcare. National Standard Guide for Community Interpretation Services (2007) - Healthcare Interpretation Network
(<https://ailia.ca/resources/Documents/National%20Standard%20Guide%20for%20Community%20Interpreting%20Services.pdf>)

Provincial Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2017
(http://pulse.iwk.nshealth.ca/load_file.cfm?section=depserv&theFile=ProvDiversityFramework%5FFinal%20Sept18%5F2017%2Epdf)

Your Experiences Matter Vision <https://yourexperiencesmatter.com/about/mission-vision/>

Newcomer Navigation Network. (2021). National Standards for Healthcare Equity. Retrieved from <https://www.newcomernavigation.ca/en/our-network/resources/documents/N4-Position-Paper-National-Standards-for-Healthcare-Equity-en.pdf>

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policies

[IWK Health Policy 1836 Translation Services](#)

[IWK Health Policy 1003.0 Minimum Documentation Standards](#)

[IWK Health Policy 302.1 Reporting, Management and Quality Review of Patient Safety Events Policy](#)

Forms

Reference any relevant forms.

Brochures

Reference any relevant brochures.

Appendices

Appendix A – Definitions (Must be words used within this Procedure)

Other Appendices

Other information relevant to this Procedure.

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APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

Bilingual Healthcare Professional	A healthcare professional who has some degree of proficiency in two languages.
Active Offer	To offer services in the clients' language of choice at the first point of contact. It is a matter of quality, safety, and fairness (source: World Health Organization)
Ad Hoc Interpreter	An untrained individual who asserts proficiency in the relevant language pair, who is called upon or volunteers to interpret. This may include healthcare practitioners, hospital staff, and family members. Note: A high level of bilingualism is the minimum qualification for a competent interpreter but by itself does not ensure the ability to interpret (source: <i>National Council on Interpreters in Healthcare</i>).
Professional Trained Health Interpreters	Individuals paid and provided by the hospital to interpret. These interpreters are trained in health interpretation and follow the <u>National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services</u> .
In-Person Interpretation	A mode of language interpretation in which interpretation is provided at the site of health care or services delivery. The language interpreter is present in the room with the Patient and the health care provider(s). For the most up to date information on the service available for in-person interpretation, visit the Language Services page on Pulse.
Interpreting/Language interpretation	The verbal rendering of one language into a second language and vice versa to facilitate the exchange of communication between two or more persons speaking different languages.
Limited Proficiency in English (LEP)	A limited ability or inability to speak, read, write, or understand the English language in order for a Patient to interact with a team member.
Team Member	Unless specifically limited by a certain policy, refers to all Employees, physicians, learners, volunteers, board members, contractors, contract workers, and those with affiliated appointments and other individuals performing activities within IWK Health.

Patient	For the purposes of this policy, defined as all individuals including clients of all ages and members of the public who receive or have requested healthcare or services from IWK Health.
Family	For the purposes for the policy, defined as a patient's substitute decision maker and persons of which the patient or substitute decision maker have consented to sharing information with.
Telephone Interpretation	A mode of language interpretation in which interpretation is provided via telephone. The interpreter is at a different physical location than the Patient and health care provider(s). Telephone interpretation allows for an audio connection between the Patient and health care provider(s). Telephone interpretation is accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and can be reached via any telephone handset, either landline or mobile. For most up to date information on how to access this service, go to the Language Services page on Pulse.
Translation	The conversion of a written text into a written text in a second language corresponding to and equivalent in meaning to the text in the first language. A delay is required to complete translation of a text into another language(s). (See Policy # 1834- Translation of Electronic and Written Materials.
Video Interpretation	A mode of language interpretation in which interpretation is provided via internet or similar technology. The interpreter is at a different physical location than the Patient and health care provider(s). Video interpretation allows for both audio and visual connections between the Patient and health care provider(s). Video interpretation is accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and can be reached via a data-enabled iPad on which the video language interpretation application is installed. For the most up to date information on how to access this service, visit the Language Services page on Pulse.
Sight Translation	The conversion of written material in one language to a spoken version in another language.

IWK/NSH Policy Documents Being Replaced

(Please List)

Version History

(To Be Completed by the Policy Office)

Major Revisions (e.g. Standard 4 year review)	Minor Revisions (e.g. spelling correction, wording changes, etc.)