

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS (SPECIAL) SERVICES FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

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REFERENCE: Safety code 1259, Assembly Bill (AB) 389 - Hospital Language Assistance Services

PURPOSE:

To describe the special communication services available to patients, and the ways in which hospital staff and patients may access these services.

POLICY:

This policy is instituted in compliance with state law, health and safety code section 1259, AB 389 and in accordance with San Gabriel Valley Medical Center's commitment to provide special communication services to patients/families with language or communication barriers. SGVMC recognizes the importance of assuring accessibility to individualized, high quality health care for all patients and their families.

Description of Services

Special communication services available to patients and their families are listed below. These services and their methods of access are described in the attached list entitled: "Special Communication Resources".

- Provision of interpreter services for persons with a primary language other than English, via "Stratus" a video remote interpretation service.
- Provision of interpreter services and communication devices for hearing -impaired persons, i.e., sign language interpreters, phone amplifiers, TDD telephone.

SGVMC also provides the following:

- Provision of patient consent forms, advance directives and other appropriate forms in the four primary languages of the patient population, i.e., English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese.
- Provision of patient education written materials in the primary languages of the patient population.
- Notification/education of hospital staff regarding the availability of special communication services and the procedures entailed in accessing these services. The "Special Communication Resource" list is distributed during New Staff Orientation sessions.
- Notification of patients, families and visitors of the availability of these services in the hospital. San Gabriel Valley Medical Center posts notices on our hospital website, in the emergency department, admitting area, all entrances and in outpatient areas, which list the languages for which interpreter services are available. These notices advise patients of the availability of

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interpreters, the procedures for obtaining an interpreter, the state Department of Health Services (DHS) telephone number, where complaints may be filed (including TDD number) and the address and telephone number of the local DHS office.

Identification of Patients with Special Communication Needs

The admitting nurse assesses the need for special communication services via the “interdisciplinary initial assessment” for each patient admitted to the hospital. The patient’s primary language or dialect is documented, in addition to the need for an interpreter and special communication devices. The nurse arranges for special communication services, per the instructions on the “Special Communications Resources” list.

Provision of Special Communication Services

All members of the health care team, including the physician, are responsible for securing interpreters and other needed special communication devices for the patient before or during times for which these services are indicated.

Interpreter Services

Interpreters are available through the, “Stratus”, video remote interpretation services for a wide array of languages. Staff shall utilize the Stratus Video Interpreting service to communicate with patients and caregivers.

Whenever the patient or the patient’s legal representative’s primary language is not one for which a consent form has been prepared, an interpreter who is fluent in that language shall prepare a written translation of the form which the patient is given. If time does not permit this, the Stratus Video Interpreting service is used to orally translate the form for the patient, and ask the patient to sign the English form if the patient agrees to the terms and conditions that the interpreter orally stated. If the patient or the legal representative agrees, the nurse will document in the electronic medical record the number of the interpreter and language translated for the patient.

Interpreter Competency Verification

The staff will use “Stratus” video remote interpretation services and document the interpreters’ number.