Effective Alternative Communication Resources

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Authored by:
Allison Hamlet
Patient Representative Department
Objectives

After you complete this Computer-Based Learning (CBL) module, you should be able to:

• Summarize GHS’s policies and requirements regarding communication with:
  • Patients, visitors and family with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and
  • Patients with physical, sensory (deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired), or other disabilities who are unable to communicate without assistance.

• Describe the benefits of using an interpreter.
Objectives, continued

After you complete this Computer-Based Learning (CBL) module, you should be able to:

- Give examples of situations in which an interpreter is required.
- List the reasons not to use patients’ family or friends as interpreters.
- Identify tools that are available for associates when communicating with patients, visitors and family with LEP and alternative communication needs.
Overview

• This CBL discusses the communication needs of two specific populations:
  • Patients, visitors and family with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and
  • Individuals with physical, sensory or other disabilities who are unable to communicate without assistance.

• GHS policies covering these communications include (click on the hyperlink to read each policy):
  • Interpretation/Translation, policy #100-77.
  • Alternative Communication Services, policy #100-76.

• Laws addressing these communications include:
  • Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and
  • Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
GHS Policies

Interpretation/Translation Policy

Per Interpretation/Translation policy #100-77:

- It is the goal of GHS to provide reasonable and effective communication for patients, visitors and family with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
- GHS is committed to ensure each of its facilities provides equal opportunity to the services it provides for all patients and their representatives with LEP.
Alternative Communication Services Policy

Per Alternative Communication Services policy #100-76:

- It is the goal of GHS to ensure that communication with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communication with individuals without disabilities.
- GHS provides, free of charge, appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from GHS’s:
  - Goods,
  - Services,
  - Facilities,
  - Privileges,
  - Advantages, and
  - Accommodations.
Title VI

• Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

• From Title VI: “It is the responsibility of all health and social service providers to ensure that Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons receive the language assistance adequate enough to afford them meaningful access to their services, free of charge.”
Legal Requirements

Americans with Disabilities Act – Title III

- Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits healthcare professionals from discriminating against individuals on the basis of disability.
- The ADA requires that healthcare professionals furnish auxiliary aids when necessary to ensure effective communication.
- Auxiliary aids include such services or devices as:
  - Qualified sign language interpreters,
  - Assistive listening headsets,
  - Television captioning and decoders,
  - Telecommunications devices for deaf persons (TDDs),
  - Amplified phones with “talk back” and Braille characters,
  - Pressure sensitive nurse call pads,
  - Readers, taped texts, Braille materials, and large print materials.
Frequently Encountered Languages

The top five frequently encountered languages at GHS are:

1. Spanish
2. Vietnamese
3. Korean
4. Bosnian
5. Mandarin
Benefits of Using an Interpreter

- Using an interpreter is **required by GHS Policy and federal law**.
- Using an interpreter also enables GHS to:
  - Provide more effective care and accurate diagnosis.
  - Offer patients a clearer understanding of prognosis and treatment.
  - Reduce errors.
  - Decrease delay in patient care and communication.
Situations that Require an Interpreter

Call an interpreter whenever you need to ensure that healthcare information is properly communicated with and understood by our customers. Examples include any decision-making process, such as:

- Consents,
- Past medical history,
- Current medication,
- Admission process,
- Diagnoses,
- Surgical procedures,
- Discharge instructions, or
- Conversations regarding healthcare plan with physicians and other healthcare providers.
Bilingual Associates as Interpreters

• GHS **prohibits** bilingual associates, who have not successfully completed a medical interpreter qualification/certification program, from serving as an interpreter.

• A bilingual associate who has not completed this program:
  • May not be proficient in both languages,
  • Often is not proficient in medical terminology, and
  • May lack interpreting skills.
Bilingual Associates as Interpreters, cont.

- In addition:
  - Interpreting can distract from the job the associate was hired to do.
  - Interpreting by a non-qualified associate may lead to misinterpretation, omissions and additions.
  - Speaking a “little” of a certain language does not qualify someone to use the language in a medical setting.
How to Use an Interpreter

• Communicate clearly with your interpreter.
• Remember, the interpreter will relay **everything** you say in his or her presence.
• Don’t assume that your patient/family does not understand English or can read lips.
• Look at the patient when you speak, just as if you speak his or her language.
• The interpreter will speak in first person.
  • You do the same.
• Pause frequently.
How to Use an Interpreter, cont.

• The interpreter will inform you if clarification is needed.
• Give the patient a chance to ask questions.
• Do not ask the interpreter to communicate alone with a patient, even if the interpreter has interpreted the same information multiple times.
• Document use of the interpreter on GHS-approved medical record forms.
Do Not Use Family or Friends

- GHS policy **prohibits** the use of non-qualified interpreters to serve as interpreters in all medical situations for family members or others.
- Patient’s rights and confidentiality may be violated by using family members as interpreters.
- Family members sometimes will not interpret the entire communication exchange.
GHS requires that a qualified interpreter be present during the conversation to ensure that an accurate description of the information is communicated between caregiver and patient.

If a patient refuses to use a qualified interpreter:
- Use an interpreter to convey to the patient that the services are free of charge.
- If a patient insists on not using a qualified interpreter, document refusal in the medical record and have patient sign waiver.
  - The waiver is an attachment to Interpretation/Translation, policy #100-77.
  - It is available in English, Spanish and Korean.
Obtaining an Interpreter: GMC-L

GMC-Lawrenceville has language interpreters available as follows:

- Spanish in-house interpreter
  - In-house:
    - 8 a.m. - 11 p.m.
    - 678-381-4933 or 678-381-5510
  - Women’s Pavilion:
    - 8 a.m. - 11 p.m.
    - 678-381-5863 or 678-381-6210
  - Emergency Department:
    - 8 a.m. - 1:30 a.m.
    - ext. 25103 or 25004
Obtaining an Interpreter: GMC-D

GMC-Duluth has language interpreters available as follows:

- **Spanish in-house interpreter**
  - Mon. – Fri.
    - 7 a.m. - 11 p.m.
    - Ext. 28021
  - Sat. – Sun.
    - 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
    - Ext. 28021

- **Korean interpreter**
  - Mon. – Fri.
    - 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
    - Ext. 6756 or 770-375-9546
Additional GHS Resources

• Telephonic interpretation is available system-wide to all GHS associates via Language Line Services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

• To reach an over-the-phone foreign language interpreter, call, toll free, 1-800-815-2002 (client ID #299025).

• The language line provides access to 170 languages, including:
  • Vietnamese,
  • Bosnian, and
  • Mandarin.
Additional GHS Resources

• Dual handset phones and cordless speaker phones are available for using the language line.

• You can access the phones:
  • On each patient care unit.
  • By calling the Patient Representative Department.
Additional GHS Resources, cont.

• Translated materials are available:
  • On GMCConnect and each patient care unit.
    • These are vital documents commonly used by patients, available in several languages.
      • Patient education
      • Discharge instructions
      • Consents
      • Treatments

• Sign language interpreters are available upon request 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling the Patient Representative Department.
Congratulations!

- You have completed this CBL module.
- Proceed to complete the Effective Alternative Communication Acknowledgment.
- Questions? Contact:
  - Allison Hamlet, Manager
  - Patient Representative Department
  - 678-312-4343
  - ahamlet@gwinnettmmedcalcenter.org