

Working with Interpreters



Interpreter Services
Harborview Medical Center
2009



Our goal:
to help you make your
interpreted communications
more effective and efficient



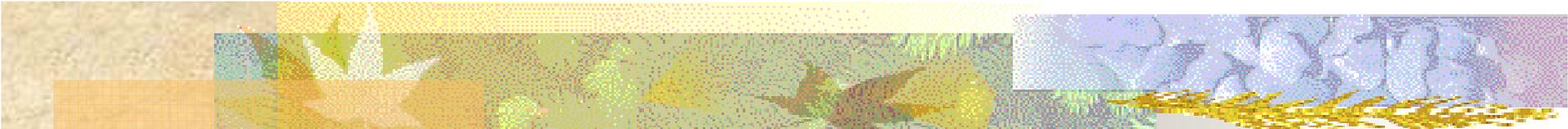
At the conclusion of this program you will be able to:

- Identify the multiple roles of an interpreter
- Structure an interpreted encounter
- Identify best practices
- Identify behaviors to avoid in interpreted encounters
- Know where to seek cultural consultation



Who should interpret?

- An interpreter, NOT a family member
- An interpreter, NOT a co-worker
- Medical interpreters at Harborview are trained and have passed a DSHS examination in language and ethics.
- As a recipient of Federal funds, HMC can only utilize DSHS certified interpreters.

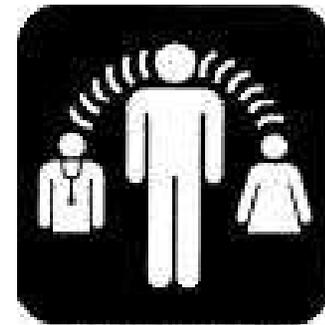


Why interpreters?

- Communication is an essential tool in diagnosis and treatment.
- Safety issues
- Liability issues
- The law requires it:
 - Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act
 - DSHS Guidance of August 2000
- CLAS Standards
- JCAHO 2004 standards

What do interpreters do?

- Transmit **meaning** from one language to another.





What are the roles of an interpreter?

- Conduit: transmitting everything
- Clarifier: changing the form of the message, in order to preserve the meaning of the message



Interpreter roles

- Cultural broker: providing the necessary framework for understanding the message being transmitted
- Advocate: taking action on behalf of either the patient or the provider outside the bounds of the interpreted encounter



Structuring the interpreted encounter

- Pre-session
- Encounter
- Post-conference
- Record the name of the language and the interpreter



The pre-session

- Introduction
- What are the time constraints?
- Establish the context, nature, goal of visit.
- Is there cultural information that would be helpful in this encounter?
- Encourage the interpreter to ask for clarification if s/he doesn't understand something that you have said..



The encounter

- Be aware of positioning
- Articulate or reinforce confidentiality
- Establish that anything that anyone says will be interpreted
- Speak to the patient, not the interpreter
- Speak in first person
- Speak in relatively short segments



Post-conference

- Is there additional cultural information that will help me to care for this patient?
- Is there anything I could have done differently to facilitate your interpretation?
- How are you doing?



Avoid

- Idiomatic speech
- Acronyms
- Complicated sentence structure
- Changing ideas mid-sentence
- Asking more than one question at a time



Remember

- Concepts that can be expressed briefly in English may have no linguistic equivalent in the target language
 - This leads to the use of descriptions, word pictures and lengthier exchanges



For Pharmacists

- Use the telephone immediately!
- Have appropriate equipment, such as two-handed phones, plugged in at window at all times
- Have this telephone pre-programmed to dial the telephonic agency



For Pharmacists

- Do not assume any knowledge on part of patient
- Do not assume that the prescribing physician has done any education
 - The patient will quite possibly have either NO information or MISinformation about medication in general, and this medication in particular
 - Many non-English-speaking and Deaf patients have been taking their medication wrong in the past, so it will only compound their mistakes if you tell them to continue taking it as before



For Pharmacists

- Ask the patient to tell you the directions back to you in his own words
 - This is the best way to know where the gaps in your teaching are
 - NEVER ask the patient if he understands. He will either think that he understands when he does not, or he will be unlikely to tell you that he does not understand



For Pharmacists

- Give the patient the info in his own language if possible, in addition to the English label
 - If this is not possible, use a universal med form such as the one developed at UWMC, which is suitable for patients in any language and for any literacy level



How to request an interpreter

- Available 24 hours, 7 days per week
 - Contact Interpreter Services at: **744-9250**
- Interpreter Services schedulers are available from **6am–6pm Mon-Fri** to take your requests
- After hours, your call to **744-9250** will be forwarded directly to Pacific Interpreters on a dedicated line
 - No more codes to remember
 - Just one number for everything
- To ensure interpreter support, when possible, **please schedule your request three days ahead** of the appointment time