

Sign Language Interpreting in Medical and Mental Health Settings

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late-Deafened Patients, Spouses, Parents, and Guardians:

If you are preparing to have surgery, going to counseling, bringing your hearing child to the emergency room, or have another medical or mental health situation, you might need an interpreter for full communication access. Whenever an interpreter is needed, it is very important that the interpreter is qualified to do the job. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act – the ADA – a **qualified interpreter** is “an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any specialized vocabulary necessary for effective communication.” See ADA Part 36.104 for this definition: <http://www.ada.gov/reg3a.html#Anchor-36104>

You have the right to communication access with medical and mental health providers.

For more information about your rights to qualified interpreters in a medical or mental health setting, visit the ADA Home page <http://www.ada.gov> or the National Association of the Deaf website: www.nad.org You can also visit the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) site to read Standard Practice Papers:

Medical interpreting:

http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/Drafts_June_2006/Health_Care_Settings_SPP.pdf

Mental health interpreting:

http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/Mental_Health_SPP.pdf

Medical Facilities and Professionals in the medical and mental health fields:

You may at some time need an interpreter to communicate with your Deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf Blind, or late-deafened patient, or with their Deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf Blind, or late-deafened spouse, parent, guardian, or family member. This might be for triage in the emergency room, a weekly therapy session, or for 24-hour coverage in intensive care. It is vitally important in these situations to work with a qualified interpreter, one who has training and experience in medical or mental health interpreting. In many cases, your specific need for interpreters does not justify hiring a full-time staff interpreter. Working with an experienced interpreting services provider to obtain services on an as-needed basis can help to make your communication accessibility a reasonable task.

Interpreters accept assignments based on their varied skill sets, depending on the type of interpreting needed: sign language is appropriate with many who are Deaf or hard of hearing, tactile or close vision communication with many who are Deaf Blind, and oral transliteration with many who are late-deafened. In addition, a qualified **Deaf Interpreter** may be needed in situations involving children, or with someone who has limited formal language, limited cognitive function, or is from another country.

There may be someone in your hospital or office who knows sign language, but unless that person is qualified for the job, serious errors can occur in the interpretation. Alternately, the patient, or their family member or friend may offer to interpret. Again, errors can occur, and a true and accurate interpretation may not be rendered. Furthermore, while that person tries to function as the interpreter, they cannot also fully function as the patient, spouse, or parent.

When you need a sign language, tactile, or oral interpreter for full communication, protect your important professional interactions by working with a qualified interpreter.

Under **HIPAA** Standards when working with a qualified interpreter, the patient's privacy is not compromised. For detailed information, go to the U.S. Health and Human Services website:

<http://www.hhs.gov/hipaafaq/providers/business/760.html>

For more information on medical interpreting:

See the Standard Practice Paper published by the national Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID):
http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/Drafts_June_2006/Health_Care_Settings_SPP.pdf

For more information on Mental Health Interpreting:

See the Standard Practice Paper published by RID:
http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/Mental_Health_SPP.pdf

For more information on the need for a Deaf Interpreter:

See the Standard Practice Paper published by RID:
http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/CDISPP.pdf

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SCHEDULE A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER, **CONTACT SLIS.**
CALL **770-531-0700** (VOICE) OR EMAIL requests@slisinc.com