

PURPOSE

- All clients are entitled to receive communication and clinical cares in a format that they understand.
- The use of interpreters is highly recommended; interpreting services are important to healthcare as they allow complete communication between a patient and the healthcare provider. Failing to use a competent interpreter runs a high risk of inadequate communication that could result in misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment.

1. SCOPE

- a. All Total Care Health Service's clients and staff

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Interpreter** - a person who interprets, especially one who translates speech orally or into sign language. A health Interpreter has been specifically trained to assist with interpreting in medical situations
- b. **'Untrained' interpreter** - refers to family members, friends, support persons, staff or anyone who has not had professional training as an interpreter

3. RESPONSIBILITIES**a. Business Managers**

- i. To identify organisations that can provide free telephone interpreting services for TCHS clients applicable to their needs across all geographical areas in which clients are serviced.
- ii. To enrol the organisation in Auckland DHB (CMDHB/ADHB/WDHB) interpreting services
- iii. To ensure a process is in place that enables clients that require interpreting services to be identified and to encourage the use of such services

b. Community Nurses

- i. To identify at first visit those clients that may require assistance with interpreting.
- ii. To identify if there are family or others who are available to assist with non-medical interpretation
- iii. To work with the CNLs to ensure appropriate interpreting services can be made available to the client
- iv. If at any time informed consent is not able to be gained through language difficulties a treatment or procedure should be delayed until assistance can be arranged

4. PROCEDURE

- a. Referrers should be encouraged to document if English is a client's second language and if it is likely interpreting services will be required

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- b. Where it is identified that a client will require assistance with medical interpretation [in Auckland] the service related to DHB area should be contacted. (See Associated Forms for instructions)
 - c. For clients out of the Auckland catchment local resources should be identified and utilised
 - d. When immediate access to a professional interpreter is not possible and a delay in obtaining a professional interpreter would result in harm to the patient / clients, this needs to be documented in the patient / client's clinical notes
 - e. The use of an untrained interpreter can be unsafe from a clinical safety perspective and can be culturally inappropriate. It is not recommended that untrained interpreters be used due to the potential risks. Refer to "Risks of Using an Untrained Interpreter"

Risks of Using an Untrained Interpreter

Omission Interpreter may leave out part of the sentence or explanation or may not interpret bad news or poor prognosis to their loved ones

Addition Interpreter may add their own words to those of the patient / client's

Substitution Interpreter may incorrectly translate because they cannot think what the patient / client means; or does not know an exact synonym; or the concept does not exist in the target language or culture

Role Exchange Interpreter takes over the session

Closed / Open Statements Interpreter changes closed into open statements and vice versa

Normalisation Strange statements may be 'normalised' for the benefit of the practitioner which increases the possibility of misdiagnoses

Condensation Interpreter summarises what the patient / client says

5. EXCEPTIONS

- a. Clients have the right to choose to use an untrained interpreter if they prefer. Community Nurses should advise them of the benefits of using a trained person however if they continue to decline the service this should be documented in the client's notes. A child under 18 should not be used as an interpreter.

6. REFERENCES

- a. ADHB Interpreter Services
- b. WATIS - Waitemata Auckland Translation & Interpreting Service
- c. IT IS - Interpreting and translation service CMDHB

7. ASSOCIATED FORMS

- a. C 2.2.1 When & How to Use ADHB Primary Health Interpreting Services
- b. C 2.2.2 Free Interpreting Services - A User Guide for Patients