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ADDITIONAL  
APPROVAL(S): **None**

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SUBJECT: **Patients with Language or Communication Barriers**

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### **Purpose**

Health and Safety Code Section 1259 requires licensed general acute care hospitals to adopt a policy for providing language assistance services to patients with “language or communication barriers”.

### **Policy**

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital will provide for the use of interpreters whenever a language or communication barrier exists. Interpreters will be available by telephone or remote video interpreting 24 hours a day. A patient may, after being informed of the availability of the interpreter service, choose to use a family member or a friend instead.

### **Definitions**

- Language or communication barriers means:
  - With respect to spoken language, barriers which are experienced by individuals who are limited English speaking or non English speaking individuals who speak the same primary language and who comprise of at least 5 percent of the population of the geographical area served by the hospital or of the actual patient population of the hospital.
  - With respect to sign language, barriers which are experienced by individuals who are deaf and whose primary language is sign language.
- Interpreter means: someone fluent in English and in the necessary second language, who can accurately speak, read, and readily interpret the necessary second language, or a person who can accurately sign and read sign language. Interpreters must have the ability to translate the names of body parts and to describe competently symptoms and injuries in both languages. Interpreters may include members of the medical or professional staff.

**Procedure for Obtaining Interpreter Services**

RRH offers interpretation services for our employees and physicians who wish to communicate with limited or non-English speaking patient or with a hearing impaired or hard of hearing patient.

For patients that are hearing impaired, hard of hearing, or that need for a foreign language interpreter, RRH utilizes Language Line Solutions. Language Line is an On-Demand Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and/or two way audio solution providing 24/7 access to certified interpreters through an easy to use, high quality, software based solution. Additionally, we have two way telephone communication available in several areas of the hospital. All equipment is available for movement to where the patient need is.

Appropriate equipment for Language Line services portable IPAD installed video are available in patient care areas including but not limited to:

- Emergency Department
- Urgent Care Clinic/Rural Health Clinic
- South Campus clinics
- Mountain View Medical/Surgical
- Maternal child unit

Please review the Language Line instructional guides attached to this policy for detailed step-by-step instructions.

Also available through Language Line Services is document translation. The service is available anytime a document is needed to be translated into English or from English into more than 140 languages.

**Procedure for Obtaining Written Consent**

If the patient's primary language is not one for which a consent form has been prepared, an interpreter who is fluent in that language should prepare a written translation of the form that the patient can be given. If time does not permit this, the interpreter should orally (or in sign language) 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 agrees, the form will be stamped with the following statement:

<p>I have accurately and completely read the foregoing Document to _____ (patient's name) in _____ (identify language), the patients primary language. He/she understood all of the terms and conditions and acknowledged his/her agreement thereto by signing the document in my presence.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Interpreter Signature</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>

**Attachments**

- Language Line Reference Guide
- LanguageUC Implementation Guide
- Partnering with an Interpreter
- State Law Requirements 2016