



HealthPartners/GHI

Subject: Interpreter Services	Attachments <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Key words: Interpreter's, Interpreter conduct and expectations	Number AI001
Category: Business Practices (BP)	Effective Date 01/01/2007
Manual: HPI Administrative Program	Last Review Date 01/01/2007
Issued By: Hospital and Regional Network Management	Next Review Date 01/01/2008
Applicable To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpreters • interpreter services agencies • all primary care medical groups and providers • all specialty care medical groups and providers • all facilities and facility providers <p>*Some exclusions may apply</p>	Origination Date 01/01/2007
	Retired Date
Review Responsibility: Contracted Care Division	Contact Rhonda Klint

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to set forth HealthPartners' customer service, quality and business expectations of interpreters.

II. POLICY: Interpreters, interpreter services agencies, primary care medical groups and providers, specialty care medical groups and providers, and facilities and facility providers will abide by any and all procedures listed below.

III. PROCEDURE(S):

Billing the Health Plan for State Public Programs Coverage

- Interpreter services agencies should submit claims to HealthPartners for Covered Services only for HealthPartners members with certain state public programs coverage: Prepaid Medical Assistance Program; Prepaid General Assistance Medical Care; Prepaid MinnesotaCare; Minnesota Senior Health Options.
- Covered Services include interpreter services for medical, dental, home care, skilled nursing facilities and Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services. Covered Services do not include interpreter services provided in connection with inpatient hospital services, which are the responsibility of the treating hospital
- Ancillary expenses related to providing interpreter services (for example: interpreter's mileage, parking, or meals) are either not allowable or built into the reimbursement for the service and thus are not separately billable. The interpreter services agency should not submit claims to HealthPartners for these expenses.
- HealthPartners contracts with a network of interpreter services agencies to provide interpreter services to HealthPartners members and patients. Spoken language interpreter services provided by a vendor that is not part of this defined network will require a referral by the primary care clinic and HealthPartners will not process a claim for payment without a referral from the primary care clinic.

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- HealthPartners currently does not have contracts for sign language interpreter services. Some of HealthPartners preferred vendors are listed below.
 - All Hands
 - C S D
 - ASL Interpreter Services

No Health Plan Coverage for Other HealthPartners Products or Fee-for-Service Medicaid Products:

- Sign and spoken interpreter services are not a covered benefit under any HealthPartners' products not listed in the first paragraph on the preceding page. Therefore, interpreter services agencies should not submit claims to HealthPartners and HealthPartners will not make payment for interpreter services rendered to a HealthPartners member covered under these other HealthPartners' products. The treating provider/clinic is responsible for providing and bearing the costs of interpreter services provided to patients under these other HealthPartners' products.
- Interpreter services are a covered benefit for patients with fee-for-service Medical Assistance, and fee-for-service MinnesotaCare coverage but the treating provider/clinic must seek and obtain payment from the Minnesota Department of Human Services for interpreter services provided to patients with these coverages. Thus, interpreter services agencies should not submit claims to HealthPartners and HealthPartners will not make payment for interpreter services rendered to patients in these fee-for-service products.

How to Provide Interpreter Services for HealthPartners

- Contracted medical groups, facilities and providers provide access to interpreter services (for patients for whom this is a HealthPartners covered service), in several ways:
 - Contracts with Interpreter Service Agencies;
 - Staff interpreters; and/or,
 - Telephonic interpreter access with Language Line.
- The interpreter's agency must have a contract with HealthPartners in order to provide interpreter services for HealthPartners members and patients.
- The clinic or health plan must request the interpreter through the interpreter services agency. Individual interpreters cannot book the interpreter appointment directly.

Customer Service Expectations

HealthPartners expects contracted interpreters and interpreter services agencies to follow these customer service requirements for interpreter service visits. These requirements are critical to the quality of the care and service provided.

- Members initiate scheduling, confirmation and cancellation of medical/dental appointment with assistance from the interpreter.
- Interpreter must check in and out at the front desk and fully complete all appropriate paperwork.
- The interpreter is expected to assist members with appointment check-in.
- The interpreter is expected to stay with the member for the duration of the appointment, including but not limited to, lab, radiology, and pharmacy.
- If the interpreter's agency is aware that the clinic or facility has an interpreter for the designated language on staff, the interpreter services agency should not supply an interpreter without the approval from the appropriate facility contact person.
- The interpreter shall not make or receive phone calls, (unrelated to the appointment) or conduct any other personal business during the appointment.
- Verification of member eligibility must be done by interpreter services agency representatives and not by individual interpreters.

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- If requested by the member, the interpreter must assist the member with booking future clinic appointments. The member or their authorized representative must be present in person or via telephone when this appointment is set.
 - The interpreter services agency must make best efforts to provide gender appropriate interpreters if requested by the member or clinic.
 - The interpreter services agency must furnish and require the use of identification badges that include a picture, name of the agency and full name of the interpreter.
 - If there are performance issues with specific interpreters, the interpreter services agency will implement a corrective action plan or disciplinary action. In addition, the interpreter services agency shall monitor the quality of interpreter performance. Examples of possible performance issues include, but are not limited to:
 - Late arrivals to appointments without a valid reason or notice
 - Missing appointments without a valid reason or notice
 - Lack of fluency in languages
 - Leaving an appointment prior to completion of assignment
 - Failure to wear ID badge or provide identification to staff when requested
 - Soliciting business from clinic patients or staff
 - Fraudulent documentation
 - Offering unsolicited advice on a member's insurance coverage

Spoken Language Interpreter Guidelines: HealthPartners expects all Spoken Language interpreters to follow these guidelines.

- The interpreter treats as confidential, within the treating team, all information learned in the performance of their professional duties, while observing all legal requirements regarding disclosure.
- The interpreter strives to render the message accurately, conveying the content and spirit of the original message, taking into consideration its cultural context.
- The interpreter strives to maintain impartiality and refrains from counseling, advising or projecting personal biases or beliefs.
- The interpreter maintains the boundaries of the professional role, refraining from personal involvement.
- The interpreter continuously strives to develop awareness of his/her own and other cultures, including cultural attitudes regarding biomedical issues, encountered in the performance of their professional duties.
- The interpreter treats all parties with respect.
- The interpreter strives to continually further his/her knowledge and skills.
- The interpreter must at all times act in a professional and ethical manner.

*Adapted from A National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care • July 2004
For more information please visit WWW.NCIHC.ORG*

Sign Language Interpreter Guidelines: HealthPartners expects all Sign Language interpreters to follow these guidelines.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. has set forth the following principles of ethical behavior to protect and guide interpreters and transliterators for hard of hearing and deaf consumers. Underlying these principles is the desire to ensure for all the right to communicate.

- Interpreters/translitterators shall keep all assignment-related information strictly confidential.

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- Interpreters/transliterators shall render the message faithfully, always conveying the content and spirit of the speaker using language most readily understood by the person(s) whom they serve.
 - Interpreters/transliterators shall not counsel, advise or interject personal opinions.
 - Interpreters/transliterators shall accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, setting, and the consumers involved.
 - Interpreters/transliterators shall request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner.
 - Interpreters/transliterators shall function in a manner appropriate to the situation.
 - Interpreters/transliterators shall strive to further knowledge and skills through participation in work-shops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues, and reading of current literature in the field.
 - Interpreters/transliterators, shall strive to maintain high professional standards in compliance with the Code of Ethics.

Adapted from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Professional Training for Interpreters

Interpreter services agencies must have requirements for professional training of their interpreters. Professional training is critical to the quality of interpreter services provided.

- The interpreter service agency is expected to have professional requirements for its interpreters.
- The interpreter service agency is expected to provide ongoing professional training opportunities.
- The interpreter service agency is expected to have requirements, such as:
 - Demonstrated competency via certification, (e.g., Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) professional interpretation; spoken language certification)
 - Training on medical terminology
 - Training on expectations of contracted third party payers, including HealthPartners
 - Demonstration of qualifications if certification not available:
 - Understanding of and sensitivity to cultural issues
 - Demonstrated proficiency in both English and the other language, including demonstrated ability to convey information in both languages, accurately
 - Orientation and training that includes the skills and ethics of interpreting and the standards of practice (e.g., confidentiality)
 - Fundamental knowledge in both languages of medical terminology
- The interpreter service agency is expected to develop and maintain a Code of Conduct for its interpreters to maintain and uphold.

HealthPartners' Contract and Communication

- HealthPartners' contract with each interpreter service agency specifies the contractual obligations and specific payment rate amount.
- If you have questions about HealthPartners' contract, please contact your HealthPartners Contracting Representative.

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- HealthPartners holds meetings with its interpreter service agencies as needed. These meetings are to review HealthPartners' expectations and to address any issues or questions.

Note: These systems and standards described above may be superseded or supplemented by specific terms set forth in written agreement between HealthPartners and a provider group or interpreter services agency.

IV. COMPLIANCE:

V. ATTACHMENTS:

VI. APPROVAL(S):

Interpreter Services Business Operations Workgroup

NAME: Electronically approved by Babette Apland

TITLE: Senior Vice President Health Care Management

VII. ENDORSEMENT: