

## Communication Aids and Services

### Providers

If aids and services are provided, and patient and provider are still unable to manage *effective communication*, ask patient if a family member, caregiver, or friend may assist. Without permission from the patient, speaking with or asking for communication services from family members, caregivers or friends, may be a violation of HIPAA and ADA regulations. Determine who will be the designated person and document in the EMR or paper chart.

*Effective Communication* is when information between two or more people is shared or exchanged and each person is able to fully understand and make decisions based on that information. This is often a process that requires going back and forth with questions and answers until everyone has a clear understanding.

**Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs):** enable a hard of hearing person to hear better. A pocket talker is an ALD commonly used in some hospitals and other health care institutions. (See Pocket Talker below)

**Amplified Phones:** An amplified phone will make the voice of the person speaking louder, which may be helpful for people who are hard of hearing.

**Captioned Phones:** The patient reads what the speaker is saying on a phone screen. Patients may also have captioning available on their smartphone.

**CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation):** A CART transcriber types what is being said so the patient can read the discussion on a laptop, tablet or smartphone. The CART transcriber can provide on-site or remote services.

**Dry Erase Board (or whiteboard):** A board that can be written on with an erasable marker.

**Hearing Induction Loop:** Induction loops transmit clear, background-noise-free sound to the patient's hearing aid or cochlear implant. Induction loops can be installed permanently or temporarily. They may be particularly helpful in noisy environments and for support groups, educational presentations, and other community events.

**Pen and Paper:** Pen and paper may be helpful for brief, nonclinical communications.

**Pocket Talker:** A pocket talker is an amplifier with a microphone, earbuds or headset and an induction neckloop for telecoil equipped hearing aids. It amplifies the speaker's voice to help the patient hear better.

**Relay Operator:** A specially trained operator types what the speaker is saying. The words can then be read on the phone screen.

**Tablet, Laptop, Computer, Smartphone:** These devices can be used to type discussions between patient and provider. The voice activation option on a smartphone can also be used if the translation is accurate.

**UbiDuo:** Using separate screens with keyboards, patient and provider(s) can face one another as the provider types information for the patient to read. Patients can type back if they are not comfortable speaking.

## Interpreting Services

**American Sign Language Interpreter:** American Sign Language/spoken English interpreters are highly skilled professionals who facilitate communication between hearing and Deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

**Certified Deaf Interpreters:** A CDI is a deaf person who has been nationally certified to provide interpreting services to deaf people who may not be proficient in American Sign Language due to linguistic, cognitive, or other communication challenges. If a deaf person uses a sign language from another country, a CDI may be needed. A CDI typically works with a hearing ASL interpreter.

**Low-Vision Interpreting:** Deaf individuals who have low vision may need the interpreter to stand or sit very close so they can see the signs.

**Oral Interpreter:** If the patient is a skilled speechreader, an oral interpreter may be helpful. Oral interpreters and sign language interpreters *do not* provide the same service. Providers need to clarify, with the patient, which type of interpreting service will be most effective.

**Tactile Interpreting:** Sign language received by sense of touch with one or two hands (tactile), fingerspelling received by sense of touch, (tactile) Print-on-Palm (block letters drawn on the palm). \*Interpreters who sign at a close range may be preferred by some DeafBlind people.

**Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):** VRI is an interpreting service with the interpreter, in a different location. However, you may still need an on-site interpreter in medical and mental health settings. See [National Association for the Deaf and VRI](#). There are strict [guidelines for the use of VRI services](#) which hospitals and institutions must follow.

For more information see [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#)

Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) refers to communication aids and services as [Auxiliary Aids and Services](#).

