

Communicating with Hard of Hearing and Deaf Patients

Providers

- Maintain eye contact when speaking with your patient.
- Give your name and discipline and show patient your ID badge.
- Ask patient if they have a printed **Communication Access Plan (CAP)**. If not, complete one with the patient and include it in the Electronic Medical Record or paper chart.
- Inform patient of available aids and services provided by the facility. (See *Communication Aids and Services* in the Provider section of this Guide for more information.)
- Be sure all staff refer to the patient's CAP and are familiar with devices and services needed for effective communication.
- Be sure all clinical discussions are directly with the patient and not with a family member, friend, or caregiver.*
- Be sure patient leaves with clearly printed instructions or discharge plans.

*If services and/or devices are provided, and patient and provider are still unable to communicate, ask the patient if a family member, caregiver, or friend may assist. Without permission from the patient, speaking with family members, caregivers, or friends, may be a violation of HIPAA and ADA regulations.

To Facilitate Effective Communication

- Reduce background noise.
- Minimize visual distractions.
- Be sure room is well lit. The light source should be in front of the person speaking, not behind.
- Do not oversimplify, abbreviate, or dilute information. Hearing status is not related to intelligence or cognitive function.
- Be sure patient can see your mouth clearly. Do not chew gum, bite on a pen, or cover your mouth with your hand.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace, and do not exaggerate words. This distorts the mouth and can make speechreading difficult.
- Provide as much information as possible before putting on a surgical mask.
- If the patient does not understand what is being said, rephrase rather than repeat the same words or sentences.
- Inform the patient when you are changing topics or context (i.e., diagnosis, treatment, follow-up, medication).
- Use diagrams, models, illustrations, and other visual aids to augment communication.
- Use teach-back to encourage questions and ensure the patient's understanding.
- Do not ask family members, friends, or caregivers to facilitate communication.