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North Sound Mental Health Administration
Section 1500 – Clinical: Interpreter and Translation Services

Authorizing Source: 42 CFR §438.100, WAC 388-865-0410, WAC 388-03, MHD Contract 2008-2009

Cancels:

See Also:

Providers must have a policy “consistent with” this policy

Responsible Staff: Quality Manager

Approved by: Executive Director

Date: 7/7/2008

Signature:

Policy #1515.00

SUBJECT: INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

PURPOSE

To ensure that providers have effective mechanisms to communicate with consumers whose primary language is not English (Limited English Proficient = LEP), or those with sensory impairments.

DEFINITIONS

Interpretation – The oral or manual transfer of a message from one language to another language.

Translation – The written transfer of a message from one language to another language.

Certified Interpreter - A person who has passed any of the following fluency examinations:

1. Department of Social and Health Services’ (DSHS) social services interpreter or medical interpreter certification examination;
2. State of Washington office of the administrator for the courts interpreter certification examination;
3. Federal courts interpreter certification examination.

Qualified Interpreter – A person who has passed a DSHS bilingual fluency screening test in a language other than a department certified language; or is authorized by DSHS pursuant to WAC 388-03-114 to interpret a language based on certification obtained from another state or country which is comparable to the certification process used by DSHS for its certified languages.

Certified Translator – A person who has passed any of the following fluency examinations:

1. DSHS’ translator certification examination;
2. American Translators Association (ATA) accreditation examination.

POLICY

NSMHA consumers are provided oral and written information in their own language through certified and qualified interpreters and translators at every aspect of service delivery. Providers shall contract exclusively with agencies that can produce documentation that their sub-contracted interpreters/translators are certified or qualified.* NSMHA providers facilitate interpreter and translation services to eligible consumers in the language which the consumer prefers to communicate.

Consumers have the right to secure, at their own expense, their own interpreter or to have a family member or friend as their interpreter. A consumer’s refusal of a provider-arranged interpreter shall be documented in the consumer’s record. This does not waive the consumer’s right to have the provider arrange for a certified or qualified interpreter at any time in the future. Minor children shall not be permitted to serve as interpreters for their parents.

PROCEDURE

A. Interpreter Services

If the consumer speaks a language other than English but is illiterate in their native language, the provider shall arrange for the materials to be interpreted in the consumer's language, note in the consumer's record that the interpretation took place, and ensure the consumer signs the document containing the interpreted information indicating that he/she received the information.

For consumers for whom written materials are not available in their preferred language, the provider may meet this requirement by providing the information through audio or video recording in the consumer's primary language, having an interpreter read the materials in the primary language, or providing materials in an alternative format that is acceptable to the consumer. If one of these methods is used it shall be documented in the consumer's record.

B. Translation Services

The provider will post a multilingual notice in each of the DSHS prevalent languages, which advises consumers that information is available in other languages and how to access this information. The provider will also post, in the DSHS prevalent languages, a translated copy of the consumer rights as listed in the *Mental Health Benefits Booklet*. Following is a list of the DSHS prevalent languages:

1. English
2. Chinese
3. Cambodian
4. Korean
5. Laotian
6. Russian
7. Spanish
8. Vietnamese
9. Somali

At the time of intake evaluation, the provider will inform the consumer that the *Mental Health Benefits Booklet* published by the Mental Health Division (MHD) will be provided upon request. The *Mental Health Benefits Booklet* is the mechanism by which consumers are notified of their benefits, rights and responsibilities, and can be downloaded from: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/Mentalhealth/benefits.shtml> in any of the above languages, except Somali (as of 5/5/08). NSMHA and its providers will have the *Mental Health Benefits Booklet* readily available at all times for Medicaid enrollees in the DSHS prevalent languages.

At a minimum, the following written materials shall be readily available in the most prevalent non-English language, Spanish, as identified by the Department of Social and Health Services:

1. Applications for Services if applicable (Translators will be available for verbal requests for services)
2. Consent Forms (Consent for Treatment, Medication Consents, Release of Information)
3. *Mental Health Benefits Booklet* (for Medicaid enrollees)
4. Notice of Action (for Medicaid enrollees) – NSMHA will have this document readily available in the nine DSHS prevalent languages.
5. Notice of Determination

Of these documents, providers are responsible for having the first three.

Written materials, other than those delineated above, are interpreted orally and/or translated by a qualified interpreter or translator.

Whenever translated documents are sent to consumers, the English version shall be attached to the translation. Materials may be provided in English if the consumer's primary language is other than English but the consumer can understand English and is willing to receive the materials in English. The consumer's consent to receiving information and materials in English must be documented in the consumer's record.

The provider shall notify North Sound Mental Health Administration (NSMHA) of any information necessary to update the *Mental Health Benefits Booklet* within 7 days of any changes to any provider content contained in the booklet. NSMHA will then have an additional 7 days to forward any provider update information to MHD. Provider information updates should be submitted to the NSMHA Contracts Coordinator to be forwarded to MHD.

*DSHS language certification is currently available in eight languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Cambodian, Laotian, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese and Korean. Qualification screening tests are also available in all other languages.

ATTACHMENTS

None