

DREW MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Policy and Procedure

Subject:	Communication with Persons with Limited English Proficiency
Effective:	September 1, 2012
Policy Owner:	Case Management
Type of Policy:	Organizational
Policy Distribution:	All Departments

Purpose: To provide a method of communication with persons with limited English proficiency.

Drew Memorial Hospital will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits. The policy of Drew Memorial Hospital is to ensure meaningful communication with LEP patients/clients and their authorized representatives involving their medical conditions and treatment. The policy also provides for communication to information contained in vital documents, including but not limited to, waivers of rights, consent to treatment forms, financial and insurance benefit forms, etc. All interpreters, translators and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided without cost to the person being served, and patients/clients and their families will be informed of the availability of such assistance free of charge.

Language assistance will be provided through use of competent bilingual staff, or telephonic interpretation services. All staff will be provided notice of this policy and procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with LEP individuals will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter.

Drew Memorial Hospital will conduct a regular review of the language access needs of our patient population, as well as update and monitor the implementation of this policy and these procedures, as necessary.

PROCEDURES:

1. IDENTIFYING LEP PERSONS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

Drew Memorial Hospital will promptly identify the language and communication needs of the LEP person. If necessary, staff will use a language identification card (or “I speak cards,” available online at www.lep.gov) or posters to determine the language. In addition, when records are kept of past interactions with patients or family members, the language used to communicate with LEP person will be included as a part of the record.

2. OBTAINING A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER

Once a need is identified for an interpreter, usually upon admission, the employee must:

- a) Determine which language the LEP needs an interpreter for by using Language cards
- b) Contacting the appropriate bilingual staff member to interpret, in the event that an interpreter is needed, if an employee who speaks the needed language is available and is qualified to interpret.
- c) Obtaining an outside interpreter if a bilingual staff or staff interpreter or does not speak the needed language. Optimal Phone Service has agreed to provide qualified interpreter services. The agency's telephone number is 1-877-746-4674 and the hours of availability are 24/7.

Some LEP persons may prefer or request to use a family member or friend as an interpreter. However, family members or friends of the LEP person will not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by that individual and after the LEP person has understood that an offer of an interpreter at no charge to the person has been made by the facility. Such an offer and the response will be documented in the person's file. If the LEP person chooses to use a family member or friend as an interpreter, issues of competency of interpretation, confidentiality, privacy, and conflict of interest will be considered. If the family member or friend is not competent or appropriate for any of these reasons, competent interpreter services will be provided to the LEP person.

3. PROVIDING WRITTEN TRANSLATIONS

- a. When translation of vital documents is needed, each unit in Drew Memorial Hospital will submit documents for translation into frequently-encountered languages to Case Management. Original documents being submitted for translation will be in final, approved form with updated and accurate legal and medical information.
- b. Facilities will provide translation of other written materials, if needed, as well as written notice of the availability of translation, free of charge, for LEP individuals.
- c. Drew Memorial Hospital will set benchmarks for translation of vital documents into additional languages over time

4. PROVIDING NOTICE TO LEP PERSONS

Drew Memorial Hospital will inform LEP persons of the availability of language assistance, free of charge, by providing written notice in languages LEP persons will understand. At a minimum, notices and signs will be posted and provided in intake areas and other points of entry, including but not limited to the emergency room, outpatient areas, waiting areas, etc. Notification will also be provided through one or more of the following: outreach documents, telephone voice mail menus, local newspapers, radio and television stations, and/or community-based organizations.

5. MONITORING LANGUAGE NEEDS AND IMPLEMENTATION

On an ongoing basis, Drew Memorial Hospital will assess changes in demographics, types of services or other needs that may require reevaluation of this policy and its procedures. In

addition, Drew Memorial Hospital will regularly assess the efficacy of these procedures, including but not limited to mechanisms for securing interpreter services, equipment used for delivery of language assistance, complaints filed by LEP persons, feedback from patients and community organizations, etc.