

Title: Guidelines for Patients with Communication Barriers	
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Discrete Operating Unit/Facility: Banner Baywood Medical Center Banner Behavioral Health Hospital Banner Boswell Medical Center Banner Casa Grande Medical Center Banner Children's at Desert Banner Churchill Community Hospital Banner Del E Webb Medical Center Banner Desert Medical Center Banner Estrella Medical Center Banner Fort Collins Medical Center Banner Gateway Medical Center Banner Goldfield Medical Center Banner Heart Hospital Banner Ironwood Medical Center Banner Lassen Medical Center Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center Banner Ocotillo Medical Center Banner Payson Medical Center Banner Thunderbird Medical Center Banner--University Medical Center Phoenix Banner--University Medical Center South Banner--University Medical Center Tucson Banner--University Medical Imaging Center Banner--University Medical Tucson Cancer Center East Morgan County Hospital McKee Medical Center North Colorado Medical Center Ogallala Community Hospital Page Hospital Platte County Memorial Hospital Sterling Regional Medical Center Torrington Community Hospital Washakie Medical Center Wyomng Medical Center	Ambulatory Services Banner Health Clinics Banner Imaging Services Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center Banner Medical Group Banner Sleep Center Banner Urgent Care Services Banner--University Medical Group Banner--University Medical Group Phoenix Occupational Health/Employee Health Services Rural Health Clinics University of Arizona Cancer Center Banner Home Care and Hospice (BHCH) Home Health Home Infusion Therapy Home Medical Equipment Home-Based Palliative Care Hospice Olive Branch Senior Center Telehealth Post-Acute Care Services Inpatient Rehabilitation Therapy Skilled Nursing Facility Research Research Administration Research Clinics Research Family and Community Support Research Imaging Research, Nursing

I. Purpose/Population:

- A. **Purpose:** To provide appropriate communication for patients with communication barriers and their Companions.
- B. **Population:** All Employees, Patients and Companions with communication barriers.

II. Definitions:

- A. **Companion** – A person who accompanies a patient and may be authorized to communicate with Banner Health personnel about the patient. It may include others who accompany the patient and would normally receive information about the patient's health status, participate in treatment decisions, and play a role in communicating about the patient's needs, condition, history or symptoms to Banner Health personnel.
- B. **Emergent Situation** – A situation where Video Remote Interpretation or Over-the-Phone Interpretation is not available or is not appropriate, a Qualified Staff Interpreter is not available, a patient's life or limb is at risk, time is of the essence, and all other interpreting options have been exhausted.
- C. **Hard of Hearing** – Having some degree of hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. People who are hard of hearing may have cochlear implants or may use hearing aids or other assistive listening devices. They depend primarily upon spoken language in communicating with others.
- D. **Limited English Proficient (LEP)** – Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits an individual to interact effectively with health care providers and social service agencies.
- E. **Over-the-Phone Interpretation (OPI)** – Qualified Interpreters provided by contracted service over the telephone.
- F. **Patient** – A person who requests or is receiving health care services from Banner Health
- G. **Qualified Interpreter** – An individual who is qualified to interpret for a patient with barriers to communications and provides services in person at bedside, through Video Remote Interpretation, or through Telephonic Interpretation.
- H. **Video Remote Interpretation (VRI)** – Qualified Interpreters provided by video on dedicated VRI devices.

III. Policy:

- A. Patients who are deaf, Hard of Hearing, or who have speech, visual, sensory or manual impairment, or language barriers (known collectively as barriers to communication) will be provided an equal opportunity to participate in and to benefit from Banner Health services.
- B. The services of a Qualified Interpreter or other accommodations are made available to Patients or their Companions upon request, or when Banner staff identifies these needs. These services are available free of charge to Patients and their Companions.
- C. Accommodations may be initiated by any Banner Health personnel interacting with a Patient, or their Companion who has a communication barrier.
- D. Patients and their Companions with speech/hearing/vision/sensory/manual/language barriers will be ensured a means of communication with physicians and staff members involved in the patient's care.
- E. Patients and their Companions are offered the services of a Qualified Interpreter once communication barriers have been identified or services have been requested.
- F. Interpretation by family, friends, or untrained staff members is prohibited with the exception of unforeseen Emergent Situations when Banner may need to rely on these individuals until a Qualified Interpreter is available.

1. A minor (individual younger than 18 years old [19 in Nebraska]) should **not** be used as an Interpreter.

G. Banner personnel who have direct contact with individuals with barriers to communication will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of Qualified Interpreters.

IV. Procedure/Interventions:

A. General Guidelines:

1. Banner personnel offer the services of a Qualified Interpreter or other accommodations once communication barriers have been identified or services have been requested.
2. Identify the Patient and their Companion requiring interpretive services or other accommodations, and provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication.
3. A Patient's communication needs should be noted in the Patients' medical record, including filling out the interpretation documentation form in Cerner for patients who communicate through an interpreter.

B. Deaf or Hard of Hearing Patients and their Companions:

1. Refer to [Communication Services for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Patients and Companions](#)

C. Patients and their Companions with Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

1. Refer to policy [Qualified Interpreters](#)

D. Patients and their Companions with Visual Impairments:

1. Communication accommodations may include:
 - a. Guidance and verbal instructions regarding surroundings and obstacles
 - b. Documents provided in enlarged font size
 - c. Staff reading and providing information about a treatment or procedure
 - d. Verbal discharge or follow-up information including leaving instructions on a cell or home phone for later reference.

E. Patients and their Companions with Speech Impairments:

1. Provide one or more of the following aids:
 - a. Writing materials
 - b. Communication boards
 - c. Computer or tablet

F. Patients and their Companions with Manual Impairments:

1. Provide one or more of the following:
 - a. Assist those who have difficulty in manipulating print materials by holding the materials and turning pages as needed
 - b. Note-takers
 - c. Speaker phone
 - d. Other effective methods that help to ensure effective communication by individuals with manual impairments

V. Procedural Documentation:

A. Document:

1. The Banner employee requesting language assistance is responsible for documenting the use of an interpreter or communication aids in the medical record. Documentation should include the:
 - a. Type of interpretation used, such as VRI, OPI, or in-person staff or agency interpreter
 - b. Qualified Interpreter's name or identification number (optional)
 - c. Communication aids used (if applicable)
 - d. Nature of the communication

VI. Additional Information:

- A. N/A

VII. References:

- A. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: 45 CFR Part 84

- B. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: 45 CFR Part 80

VIII. Other Related Policies/Procedures:

- A. [Communication Services for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Patients and Companions](#)
- B. [Qualified Interpreters](#)
- C. [ADA/Non-Discrimination Against Patients and Companions](#)

IX. Keywords and Keyword Phrases:

- A. ADA
- B. American Sign Language
- C. ASL
- D. Blind patients
- E. Deaf
- F. Hard of Hearing
- G. Hearing impaired
- H. Interpreter
- I. Language Barrier
- J. Sign language
- K. Spanish speaking
- L. Telephonic interpretation
- M. Video remote interpretation
- N. Visually impaired
- O. VRI

X. Appendix:

- A. N/A