

Category	Corporate Policy Manual	Policy
Section	Administration	
Title:	Accessibility – Request for Sign Language Interpreting Services	
Issuing Body	AODA Accessibility Working Group	ID: Policy code
Approved by	Executive Council - TBD	
Effective Date: October 30, 2019	Reviewed Date: Sept 2021	
Controlled document. Any documents appearing in paper form must be used for reference purposes only. The on-line copy on the file server above must be considered the current documentation.		

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all patients are able to make informed decisions and give informed consent including patients who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing and require professional sign language interpreting services. Through professional interpreting services, patients are informed, comprehensive assessments and history can be obtained and optimal care and education provided. It is imperative that individuals requiring this service are made aware that it is available very early on their journey through Bluewater Health.

Policy Statement

It is the responsibility of Bluewater Health to provide accessibility for patients who are deaf and hard of hearing and use professional sign language interpreting services. This principle is supported by the Ontario Human Rights Code, the 1997 Supreme Court Eldridge decision and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the AODA).

Sign Language interpreters are included at the patient’s discretion and are bound by BWH policies, including patient confidentiality.

Ontario Interpreting Services (OIS) at The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) provides professional Interpreters. The CHS staff and freelance interpreters are required to adhere to a strict code of ethics including the duty to safeguard the right to privacy and maintain a high level of confidentiality with respect to interpreter requests .The CHS Assignment Coordinator may require additional information at time of booking to ensure optimal and timely provision of interpreting services.

Procedure

1. Visit without an Interpreter:

When a person who is deaf presents to Bluewater Health, the attending BWH staff will:

1. Offer to contact & arrange for interpreting services.
2. If the patient accepts, the BWH staff will contact The Canadian Hearing Society. Contact information for Ontario Interpreting Services at The Canadian Hearing Society:
 - Phone: 1-866-518-0000
 - TTY: 1-877-215-9530
 - E-mail: urgent@chs.ca
 - SMS/Text: 416-712-6637 (charges may apply)

3. When the Interpreting Service requests the patient's name and level of urgency of the request, BWH staff will provide this information within the consent parameters of care delivery. The patient name helps to ensure that the interpreter provided is appropriate to the needs of the particular request and can also help to ensure continuity of service.
4. The Interpreting Service may also request additional details such as: exact location, number of patients/staff, call-back information and whether an interpreter preference has been indicated.

2. Planned Visits:

How to pre-book Interpreting Services

For your convenience, all bookings are done through our **Centralized Scheduling Centre**. Requests can be made in English, ASL, French or LSQ, by phone, TTY, e-mail, fax or Skype.

For scheduled meetings and appointments:

- bookings must be requested a minimum of 3 business days in advance
- requests can be made Monday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- interpreters are available during business hours, evenings, weekends and over holidays
- services are available on-site or by [video remote interpreting](#)
- anyone can request the service

Contact CHS Interpreting Services, Centralized Scheduling Centre

- Phone: 1-866-518-0000
- TTY: 1-877-215-9530
- Skype: CHS Interpreting
- E-mail: interpreting@chs.ca
- Fax: 1-855-259-7557

Where possible more advance notice of requests for interpreting services will better ensure an interpreter's availability to provide service on the date requested. Services may be arranged for planned visits by calling the local Canadian Hearing Society office at least two weeks in advance. If a cancellation is required, appointments should be cancelled at least 2 business days prior to the appointment.

3. Unplanned Visits:

Ontario Interpreting Services reserve interpreters on a first come first served basis. However, there are exceptions to this policy, where visits are not pre-planned, which include:

- Hospital emergencies of a life and death nature or where serious injury has occurred to either the deaf person or where the deaf person is immediate family to the victim - the patient.
- Diagnosis/treatment of a serious nature requiring immediate intervention.

Unplanned requests, such as visits to the emergency room or visits for clinical tests that happen after regular business hours are scheduled through the Ontario Interpreter Services After Hours Emergency Interpreting Service which is an on-call centralized service.

How to request Emergency Interpreting Services

If you require Emergency Interpreting Services, you can contact us by Phone: 1-866-518-0000, TTY: 1-877-215-9530 or SMS/Text: 416-712-6637 (charges may apply). We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

In cases of a sudden, unforeseen crisis that requires immediate attention:

- emergency services are offered 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, 365 days/year
- emergencies may occur in: hospital emergency rooms; after-hours medical clinics; crisis centres; shelters; Police services; court settings; and child welfare cases
- Emergency Interpreting Services may not be available at all times in all regions
- anyone can request the service

Contact us:

- Phone: 1-866-518-0000
- TTY: 1-877-215-9530
- E-mail: urgent@chs.ca
- SMS/Text: 416-712-6637 (charges may apply)

4. Payment

The Canadian Hearing Society will invoice Bluewater Health for interpreting services performed. Invoices will reflect an hourly rate for service and interpreter travel costs, i.e., mileage.

The Canadian Hearing Society will provide per assignment invoices to BWH. There is a minimum 2 business day prior to service date cancellation policy. In the event of a cancellation of a pre-booked service without adequate notice, a cancellation fee will be charged.

Appendices and References:

Resources: The Canadian Hearing Society

Reference: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005, AODA