

# Communicating with Deaf People in a Medical Setting

## **Know the Facts!**

*People who are deaf may give and receive information through sign language rather than through spoken language.*



### **Do's:**

- To get the attention of a deaf person, use a gentle shoulder tap or subtle hand wave.
- Frontline staff can use a pen and paper to ask a person's basic information (i.e. name, address, and phone).
- Ask the person for the best way to contact him or her.
- Offer American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services to people who need it.
- Look directly at the person (not the interpreter) and make eye contact when speaking
- Use body language and facial expressions.
- Speak slowly and clearly at a natural pace.

### **Don'ts:**

- Don't ask the patient to bring someone to interpret.
- Don't assume the patient understands English (written or spoken) - English is a different language.
- Don't assume the patient reads lips.
- Don't exaggerate or overemphasize your words.

### **Who is required to provide an interpreter?**

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Titles II and III, Section 36.303) and Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) require hospitals and medical providers to ensure effective communication with people who are deaf.
- The law applies to communicating with the person who is deaf, as well as, with that person's parent, spouse or family member in appropriate circumstances.

*For more information, or to schedule an interpreter please call*

(949) 460-7784

Monday through Friday

8:00am to 5:00pm

FAX (949) 334-2302

For after-hours emergencies please call COMMEND

(800) 422-7444



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