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**North Sound Behavioral Health Organization**  
Section 1500 – Clinical: Interpreter and Translation Services

Authorizing Source: DBHR/North Sound BHO Contracts; 42 CFR §438.100; WAC 388-03 & 388-877

Cancels:

See Also:

Providers must comply with this policy and may develop individualized implementation guidelines as needed

Approved by: Executive Director

Responsible Staff: Deputy Director

Signature:

Date: 3/24/2017

## Policy #1515.00

### SUBJECT: INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

#### PURPOSE

To ensure the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (North Sound BHO) contracted Behavioral Health Agencies (BHA) have effective mechanisms to communicate with individuals whose primary language is not English (Limited English Proficient – LEP), and/or individuals with sensory impairments.

#### DEFINITIONS

##### Interpretation

The oral or manual transfer of a message from one (1) language to another language.

##### Translation

The written transfer of a message from one (1) language to another language.

##### Certified Interpreter

An individual 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;
4. Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI);
5. National Board of Certification for the Medical Interpreters (NBCMI).

**NOTE:** *Those persons who have not passed the DSHS social services interpreter or medical interpreter certification examination, but have passed #2 - 5, above, can only be recognized if they have submitted a written request for recognition, a photocopy of their valid official certificate and a copy of official record attesting to their completion of the required minimum DSHS interpreter/translator orientation and interpreter/translator professional ethics trainings to the entity they contract with for their language services.*

#### POLICY

Individuals receiving behavioral health services from North Sound BHO contracted BHAs are provided oral and written information in their own language through certified and qualified interpreters and translators at every aspect of service delivery.

North Sound BHO and its contracted BHAs shall contract exclusively with agencies that can produce documentation that their subcontracted interpreters/translators are certified or qualified.

North Sound BHO's contracted BHAs facilitate certified interpreter and translation services for individuals in the language which they prefer to communicate, at no additional cost to the individuals.

Individuals may secure, at their own expense, their own interpreter or choose a family member or friend to function as their interpreter. This applies to individual services only and not group services. An individual's refusal of a BHA arranged interpreter shall be documented in the individual's clinical file. This does not waive the individual's right to have the BHA arrange for a certified interpreter at any time in the future. Minor children shall not be permitted to serve as interpreters for their parents.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **1. Interpreter Services**

If an individual requires interpreter services for their treatment services, the interpreter services shall be arranged by the individual's BHA, at no cost to the individual. The BHA will pay the interpreter. The BHO pays the BHA for the interpreter services per the contract with the BHA. (Payment method varies based on the payment structure for the program in question.)

If an individual speaks a language other than English but is illiterate in their native language, BHAs shall:

- a. Arrange for materials to be interpreted in the individual's language;
- b. Note in the individual's clinical file that the interpretation took place; and
- c. Ensure the individual signs the document containing the interpreted information indicating that he/she received the information and will put a copy in the individual's clinical file.

For individuals for whom written materials are not available in their preferred language, BHAs may meet this requirement by providing the information through audio and/or video recording in the individual's primary language, having a certified interpreter read the materials in the individual's primary language, or providing materials in an alternative format that is acceptable to the individual. If any of these methods are used it shall be documented in the individual's clinical file.

### **2. Translation Services**

BHAs will post a multilingual notice in each of the DSHS determined prevalent languages, which advises individuals that information is available in other languages and how to access this information. BHAs will also post, in the DSHS determined prevalent languages, a translated copy of the individual rights as listed in the *Behavioral Health Benefits Booklet*.

Following is a list of the DSHS prevalent languages:

- a. English
- b. Chinese
- c. Cambodian
- d. Korean

- e. Laotian
- f. Russian
- g. Spanish
- h. Vietnamese
- i. Somali
- j. Arabic
- k. Amharic
- l. Punjabi
- m. Ukrainian

At the time of an initial assessment and/or initial intake BHAs must offer individuals the *Behavioral Health Benefits Booklet* published by DSHS. The *Behavioral Health Benefits Booklet* is the mechanism by which individuals are notified of their benefits, rights and responsibilities and can be downloaded from: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/division-behavioral-health-and-recovery/behavioral-health-benefits-book> in any of the above languages.

At a minimum, the following written materials shall be readily available in the most prevalent non-English language, Spanish, as identified by DSHS:

- a. Applications for Services if applicable (translators will be available for verbal requests for services);
- b. Consent Forms (Consent for Treatment, Medication Consents, Release of Information); and
- c. Notice of Action (for Medicaid enrollees).

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

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

BHAs must maintain a log of all requests for interpreter services and/or translated materials.

BHAs shall notify North Sound BHO of any information necessary to update the *Behavioral Health Benefits Booklet* within seven (7) days of any changes to any BHA content contained in the booklet. North Sound BHO will then have an additional seven (7) days to forward any BHA update information to DSHS. BHA information updates should be submitted to North Sound BHO Contracts Coordinator to be forwarded to DSHS.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None