The purpose of this policy is to:

• Provide access to Stanford Health Care (SHC) approved medical interpretation and translation services.
• Outline processes for staff accessing interpretation and translation resources for patients, visitors and health care providers.

It is the policy of SHC to provide access to competent approved medical interpretation and translation services, for patient- and family-centered effective communication between health providers and Limited English Proficient (LEP) patients and visitors who communicate in a foreign language or sign language.

Approved SHC interpreters are:

• **Staff medical interpreters for spoken languages** who have passed the SHC medical interpretation and translation competency exam.
• **Staff medical interpreters for American Sign Language (ASL)** who have passed the SHC ASL medical interpretation competency exam.
• **Agency interpreters** who have passed the SHC agency medical interpretation competency exam.
• **Interpreter interns** from accredited academic interpretation programs who are allowed to interpret/translate under SHC structured mentoring and supervision protocols.
• **Remote interpreters** provided by vendors that have contracts with SHC, available for telephone or videoconference interpretation, that meet the quality standards established by each vendor.

Approved internal and external interpreters are available in-person, via videoconference, or over the phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are offered at no cost to patients and families when interacting with SHC staff and physicians.

Non-approved interpreters are not authorized to act as medical interpreters at SHC including:

• Bilingual staff that have not been tested for interpreting skills
• Volunteers
• Visitors
• Patient’s family and friends

Non-approved interpreters may assist during non-clinical communication such as greetings and simple customer service.

This policy and the implementing procedures describe actions intended to comply with state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements, and The Joint Commission’s language access quality and patient safety standards.

DEFINITIONS

**Interpretation:** rendering an oral message from one language to another

**Translation:** writing a message from the text of one language to another

**VMI:** Videoconference Medical Interpretation

PROCEDURE

The patient’s language is documented in the medical record demographics. Staff are directed to access approved interpreters when interacting with patients whose language demographics is other than English; and when communication difficulties occur between a health care provider and patients or visitors who use a foreign language or Sign Language.

Requests for interpretation and translation services may be made by all Stanford Health Care staff, as well as by patients and their families by calling the Hospital Interpreters’ Office at 650.723.6940. Staff may also follow internal protocols described in this policy.

Deaf patients and family members who communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) must always be offered an ASL interpreter. Access to Sign Language Interpreters is a federal mandate under American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

• Interpreter Services does not provide medical interpreters for post-lingual deaf English speakers, who have become deaf as adults, and do not know how to communicate using Sign Language, but may voice, read and write English.
Interpreter Services does not provide lip reading services for hearing patients who may be “temporarily” unable to voice what they are trying to say, due to intubation or tracheotomy. In these cases, writing may be the best alternative option for communication.

Interpreter requests from external individuals/organizations not directly related to Stanford Health Care:
- SHC does not provide staff/agency/intern medical interpreters for external legal representatives or other external services and entities not related to SHC health care.
- For law enforcement officers and child protective services needing language services on the premises, SHC offers access to external phone interpreters for spoken languages, and external video-relay interpreters for sign language. Staff interpreters cannot interpret for law enforcement.
- Representatives of private law firms visiting patients must provide their own interpreters. Patients are advised to request a “Certified Legal Interpreter” for legal matters as required in California courts.
- For in-patient Psychiatric unit court hearings: SHC interpreters may be requested since the purpose of the hearing is to allow patients to voice their opinion about extending their stay for treatment at SHC.
- For medical research funded by pharmaceuticals:
  - Interpreters cannot read the consent alone, without the presence of the researcher. The provider obtaining consent must be present, to explain the consent and answer all patient questions.
  - Phone interpreters are offered for medical research consents, when in-person interpreters are not available.

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS
SHC staff interpreters and contracted third party vendors do translations of documents for the most requested languages: Chinese (simplified and traditional), Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Documents from/to other languages are translated by external agencies that have contracts with SHC.

Priority is given to vital documents. Vital documents are identified as documents that could have a clinical consequences. The supervisor of the Translation Program will evaluate requests for translation of non-vital documents.

Translation protocols:
- Staff should not use on-line translation tools assuming the end result is acceptable.
- SHC has internal quality assurance processes for translation, under the supervision of the Translation Program supervisor.
- Internal and external translations are reviewed by SHC staff professional translators competent in the target language.
- Requestors of translations not associated with SHC health care are advised to look for other (external) resources; i.e.: doing an internet search of translation agencies. SHC does not recommend any agency or vendor.

Translation requests:
- Staff may submit a request for translations by email DL-translation_of_documents@stanfordhealthcare.org, or internal mail to SHC Interpreter and Translation Services, M/C 5353, Attention: Translation Program Supervisor

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION TESTING
SHC quality standards:
- Stanford Health Care requires all interpreters who provide language services in-person within SHC facilities to be tested for medical interpretation and/or translation competency, regardless of education, training, external testing, or interpreter certification.

SIGNAGE
Patient Rights are posted in public areas and include the availability of interpretation services and access to them. They detail:
- Stanford Health Care has interpretation available in all languages including American Sign Language at no cost to patients.
- Contact number for the State department of Health Services for concerns about interpreter availability.

For more information, please call Interpreter Services at 650.723.6940 or email InterpreterServicesSHC@stanfordhealthcare.org.