Effective communication is critical to the quality of care we provide each day at MUSC. We continue to place great emphasis on it not only because of its impact on patient safety but also to ensure patients are active members of the health care team, make sound healthcare decisions, adhere to their treatment plans and have exceptional care experiences. The Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) suggests that poor communication is a leading factor in patient readmissions.

At MUSC, an increasing number of patients are limited English proficient (LEP) and require medical interpretation. We are committed to ensuring effective communication exists between all patients and providers and to providing a high reliability framework for the provision of care throughout the care continuum. To support this strategic direction we have implemented several enhancements to our medical interpretation program that will help us accomplish our patient-centered goals while simultaneously keep us in regulatory compliance. The most notable of these changes took place May 1, 2016 and provides for availability of in-house medical interpretation 24/7/365, for patients who speak Spanish.

**Enhancements to Medical Interpretation and Translation Services at MUSC**

In addition to 24-hour in-person interpreter availability, medical interpretation training and the focus on documentation, we are exploring a partnership with nurse leaders to conduct patient rounding with LEP patients. This rounding would include patients who are deaf or hard of hearing. This model will provide an opportunity to impact the patient experience and ensure we meet patient expectations. Beginning August 1st, medical interpreters will be more easily recognizable and will stand out as team members recognizable by green warmup jackets.

The following medical interpretation resources are available for patients with limited English proficiency at MUSC:

**PATIENTS WHO SPEAK SPANISH**
- In-person medical interpretation, 24/7/365
- Use Service-Hub to request an interpreter
- Conference calls – extension 2-4595
- Telephonic Interpretation—24/7/365

**ALL LANGUAGES** - Telephonic Interpretation Services
- Available 24/7/365, over 200 languages
- Call 1-855-305-0998
- Request language, including any dialects

**PATIENTS WHO ARE DEA F OR HARD OF HEARING**
- In-house Medical Interpretation: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-4:30 pm
- Interpretation (After-Hours/Weekends)- Contact Charleston Interpreting Services at 678-446-7780
- Video Remote Interpretation-(ASL), Available 24/7/365
- Equipment is stored in Security Offices at ART and Main Hospital
Many questions arise about the use of family members to serve as medical interpreters. Patients should always be reminded that interpretation services are available at no cost to them and family members should be encouraged to remain in a patient support role. It is against best practice standards and MUSC policy to use family members as medical interpreters given concerns relating to language competency, particularly in medical terminology, confidentiality, patient privacy, and conflict of interest. Should a patient insist on using a family member to serve in this role, an additional interpreter, whether in-person or telephonic, should be used to ensure that information is accurately and completely conveyed.

**TRANSLATION**

Document translation is a complimentary resource available to patients with limited English proficiency at MUSC, particularly as it relates to patient education. It is not a legal or regulatory requirement to provide this service to every patient with a language need however we are examining our ability to provide translation of important documents, in Spanish, the area of greatest need. Providers are encouraged to maximize the use of translated educational materials that are part of the StayWell Network (Krames).

The in-house medical interpretation team has undergone translation assessments and will continue to translate the After Visit Summaries (AVS) for inpatients. Also, the document translation process is being fine-tuned to encourage more timely requests and to support quicker turn-around times. In the meanwhile, medical interpreters will conduct sight translation of the English portion of the consent (that is written by the physician), since the consent is already translated. Sight translation is the oral rendition of text written from one language into another. We will continue to evaluate our ability to handle additional translation requests and we are collaborating with the MUSC-Consent Task Force to explore additional options to meet this organizational need.

**CHANGING WHAT’S POSSIBLE**

A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is part of it. We are not doing him a favor by serving him. He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so. -Mahatma Gandhi

To schedule a department training or provide compliments/complaints about Interpretation Services, please contact Antwan Walters, Coordinator, Interpretation Services at waltea@musc.edu (2-5078) or Stephanie Taylor, Director, Diversity & Inclusion at taylorst@musc.edu, or (2-2341).