

American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) And the Provision of Interpreting Services

As you may know, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare is currently engaged, as a System, in an ADA Settlement Agreement proposed by the US Attorney General. This Settlement Agreement ensures that health care providers and all Associates and Physicians communicate appropriately and effectively with persons who have disabilities and or language barriers that may compromise effective interaction. These services are used to facilitate communication about issues related to the care of the patient (i.e., explanation of treatment, informed consent, and discharge instruction, etc).

POLICY:

The hospital respects the rights and needs of patients, companions, and /or family members for effective communication. Interpreting services are used in the presence of language barriers or physical disabilities that compromise effective communication and should be used as frequently as needed for patient care. Services will be provided upon request or when the need is identified from appropriate assessment. These services are provided free of charge.

Notice to Physicians:

If you recognize or have any reason to believe that a Patient, relative, or close friend or Companion of a Patient is deaf or hard-of-hearing, you should advise the person that appropriate auxiliary aids and services, such as sign language and oral interpreters, TTY's, note takers, written materials, assistive listening devices, telephones compatible with hearing aids, closed captioned television, will be provided free of charge. If you are the responsible health care provider, you should ensure that such aids and services are provided when appropriate. All other personnel should direct that person to receive assistance by calling 516-7000, and they will be directed to the Administrative Supervisors at each facility. This offer should be made in response to any overt request for appropriate auxiliary aids or services.

The following steps are required to ensure effective communication occurs for your patients:

- 1. Promptly identify communication needs and preferences of your Patients and Companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing;**
- 2. Secure qualified interpreting services as quickly as possible when necessary; and**
- 3. Ensure your staff members notify Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare of deaf and hard-of-hearing Patient and Companions as soon as Patients are scheduled for admissions, tests, surgical procedures or other health care services within the hospitals.**

The following is an abbreviated list of patient-physician interactions which requires effective communication. *(This list is not all inclusive)*

- Informing of rights, signing consents forms, or obtaining permission to treat;
- Collecting information about medical history, assessments, or chief complaints;
- Communication between care providers and patient/companion regarding medical care;
- post-surgery sessions, physician rounds, and other physician-patient meetings,
- Communication about advance directives;
- Any other circumstance in which effective communication is necessary to ensure a patient's rights provided by law.