

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION  
Olympia, Washington**

**To:** All Providers  
Managed Care Plans  
CSD Regional Administrators  
HCS Regional Administrators  
DDD Regional Administrators

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**From:** Douglas Porter, Assistant Secretary  
Medical Assistance Administration

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**Subject: Spoken Language Interpreter Services: New Broker Contracts Awarded and Reimbursement Granted for No-Shows and Cancelled Appointments**

**Effective for dates of service on and after July 1, 2004**, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) will cover spoken language interpreter services for DSHS clients through new contracts awarded to Interpreter Services brokers. This memorandum outlines:

- The process for requesting spoken language interpreter services; and
- The list of brokers to contact.

### **What has changed?**

- Brokers are currently accepting spoken language interpreter service requests for July 2004 dates of service and after.
- Effective for dates of service on and after July 1, 2004, DSHS reimburses interpreter service providers for no-show and cancelled appointments under certain circumstances. (See page 2.)

### **Why does DSHS provide interpreter services?**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin by any entity that receives federal financial assistance. Through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, RCW 74.04.025, other legal mandates, agreements, and department policies, DSHS provides equal access to department programs and services for all persons, including those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

## Who can arrange for Spoken Language Interpreter Services?

DSHS reimburses for brokered Spoken Language Interpreter Services only when requested by the following:

- ✓ DSHS contract service providers (i.e., medical providers); or
- ✓ DSHS staff.

DSHS does not reimburse for Spoken Language Interpreter Services that are requested by anyone else. Clients and interpreters cannot request or arrange for DSHS interpreter services. In addition, individuals and organizations operating under a Regional Support Network (RSN) contract may not request interpreter services under this program unless the DSHS administration/division with which the RSN has a contract specifically agrees to pay for interpreter services requested by the RSN contractor, per the terms specified in the brokerage contracts with DSHS.



**Note:** For a list of brokers with contact information, please see attached list.

## Do Spoken Language Interpreter Services have to be arranged in advance?

Yes. To receive reimbursement from DSHS, interpreter services must be arranged **in advance** of the scheduled appointment time; otherwise the service will be denied. The brokers will respond to most requests within 48 hours, confirming whether or not the interpreter appointment can be filled.

## Does DSHS reimburse for “no-shows”?

DSHS reimburses interpreter services brokerage subcontractors, via the brokerage contractor, for client or requester “no-shows” at the rate of one-half hour per no-show. DSHS authorizes payment for a no-show when the conditions for no-shows as described in the DSHS brokerage contract are met, including written documentation.

## Does DSHS reimburse for cancelled appointments?

DSHS reimburses interpreter services brokerage subcontractors, via the brokerage contractor, for interpreter service appointments cancelled by the client or requester on the scheduled date of service, at the rate of one-half hour per appointment. The interpreter must appear at the appointment location at the appointed date and time. DSHS authorizes payment for a cancelled appointment when the conditions for a cancelled appointment as described in the DSHS brokerage contract are met, including written documentation.

## Who do I contact to arrange for Spoken Language Interpreter Services?

Contact one of the Spoken Language Interpreter Services brokers on the attached list to request a spoken language interpreter for appointments on and after July 1, 2004. The interpreter services broker is responsible for making sure that interpreters used for DSHS clients are certified, qualified, or authorized by DSHS Language Testing and Certification section (LTC) as social services or medical interpreters.



**Note:** Brokers may also arrange for non-emergent medical transportation. Unlike requests for Interpreter Services, only clients may request medical transportation. Clients requesting medical transportation use different toll-free numbers to call brokers for transportation services.

## What documentation is required?

Spoken language interpreters are required to bring either a *Brokered Interpreter Service Appointment Record* [DSHS 17-123 form] or a DSHS-approved facsimile to each interpreter service encounter. The broker will assign a Control/Authorization number to each interpreter service appointment. This Control/Authorization number must be filled in on the DSHS 17-123(x) form in the upper right hand corner or in designated spot on the DSHS-approved facsimile. A sample of a DSHS 17-123 is available for downloading at:

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/msa/forms/eforms.html>

The interpreter and the requester must complete their respective sections of the Brokered Interpreter Service Appointment Record. Instructions for completion are located on the back of the form and as a downloadable file on the web site or the DSHS-approved facsimile.

The requester must follow the instructions once the form is completed, and then validate the statements made on the form or DSHS-approved facsimile by signing and dating the document. The requester must retain a copy of the completed and signed form for his or her records.

### Note:

- ✓ DSHS reimburses for mileage if the appointment is outside a 15-mile radius of the interpreter's place of business, home, or last appointment (whichever is the actual beginning point of departure to an appointment).
- ✓ DSHS does not reimburse for interpreter services provided by public health agencies, public hospitals, and local health jurisdictions. Interpreter services provided at inpatient settings are the responsibility of the hospital and are not covered by DSHS.

- ✓ Each request for an interpreter must be for a specific DSHS client appointment for a DSHS-covered service. MAA does not pay for blocks of time.
- ✓ Requests for immediate interpreter services, after regular business hours, which cannot wait until the next regular business day for appointment scheduling, should be made to *Hopelink*, the King County service area broker, regardless of the requester's service region.

**Interpreters must not:**

- Arrange appointments for clients on behalf of the contract service provider (medical provider) or DSHS staff.
- Contact the client other than at the request of the contract service provider (medical provider) or DSHS staff.
- Provide transportation for the client to, or from, social service or medical appointments.
- Request payment from DSHS for interpreter services provided to the interpreter's family members.
- Accept compensation from clients or others on behalf of clients.
- Refuse to present, upon request, picture identification at all interpreter service appointments.



**Note:** For additional information regarding interpreter conduct issues, please see attached information: **Language Interpreter and Translator - Code of Professional Conduct.**

For further information regarding MAA's Interpreter Services Program, go to: <http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/interpreterservices/>. **This site will be updated July 2004 with additional information about interpreter brokerage.**

Attached are replacement pages G.5/G.6 for MAA's General Information Billing Instructions, dated September, 2000. To obtain DSHS/HRSA provider numbered memoranda and billing instruction, go to the DSHS/HRSA website at <http://hrsa.dshs.wa.gov> (click *the Billing Instructions and Numbered Memorandum* link). These may be downloaded and printed.

Listed below are the names, telephone numbers, and fax numbers for brokers who will serve DSHS clients effective July 1, 2004. Brokers will be reimbursed for interpreter services provided for DSHS clients only in the regions that they have been awarded a contract. Check <http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/interpreterservices/> during the month of July 2004 for a final listing of brokers.

County Served	Broker	Broker telephone number	
		Local	Long distance
Asotin Garfield Whitman	Coast Transportation Colfax, Washington	<b>VOICE:</b> (509) 397-2935 <b>FAX:</b> (509) 397-9229	<b>VOICE and TDD:</b> (800) 873-9996
Clark Cowlitz Klickitat, Skamania Wahkiakum	Human Services Council Vancouver, Washington <a href="http://www.irwc.org">http://www.irwc.org</a>	<b>VOICE:</b> (360) 694-9997 <b>FAX:</b> (360) 694-1446	<b>VOICE and TDD:</b> (800) 752-9422
King & Statewide (after hours)	Hopelink Bellevue, Washington <a href="http://hope-link.org/">http://hope-link.org/</a>	<b>VOICE:</b> 1-800-923-7433 <b>FAX:</b> (425) 644-9447	<b>VOICE:</b> (800) 923-7433 <b>TDD:</b> (800) 246-1646
Island (after hours call relay) San Juan Skagit Whatcom	N.W. Regional Council Area Agency on Aging Bellingham, Washington	<b>VOICE:</b> (360) 738-4554 (Whatcom only) <b>TDD:</b> (360) 676-6749* (Whatcom only) <b>FAX:</b> (360) 734-5476	<b>VOICE:</b> (800) 860-6812 <b>TDD:</b> (800) 585-6749  *After hours, TDD users should call the relay service at 1-800- 833-6388, to leave a message
Clallam Grays Harbor Jefferson Kitsap Lewis Mason Pacific Pierce Snohomish Thurston	Paratransit Bremerton, Washington <a href="http://www.paratransit.net/">http://www.paratransit.net/</a>	<b>FAX:</b> (360) 377-1528 or (360) 377-6017	<b>VOICE:</b> (800) 925-5438 (Pierce)  <b>VOICE:</b> (800) 756-5438 (Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason-North )  <b>VOICE:</b> (800) 846-5438 (Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason-South, Pacific, Thurston)  <b>VOICE:</b> 1-877-852-2580 (Snohomish) <b>TDD:</b> All Counties (800) 934-5438

County Served	Broker	Broker telephone number	
		Local	Long distance
<b>Benton</b> <b>Columbia</b> <b>Franklin</b> <b>Kittitas</b>  <b>Walla Walla</b> <b>Yakima</b>	<b>People for People</b> Yakima, Washington  <a href="http://www.pfp.org/">http://www.pfp.org/</a>	<b>VOICE:</b> (509) 248-6793 <b>TDD:</b> (509) 453-1302 <b>FAX:</b> (509) 853-2151	<b>VOICE:</b> (800) 233-1624 <b>TDD:</b> (800) 606-1302
<b>Adams</b> <b>Ferry</b> <b>Grant</b> <b>Lincoln</b> <b>Pend Oreille</b> <b>Spokane</b> <b>Stevens</b>	<b>Special Mobility Services</b> Spokane, Washington	<b>VOICE:</b> (509) 534-2016 <b>TDD:</b> (509) 534-8566 <b>FAX:</b> (509) 534-6980	<b>VOICE:</b> (800) 710-5030 <b>TDD:</b> (800) 821-7167 <b>FAX:</b> (888) 829-9915
<b>Chelan</b> <b>Douglas</b> <b>Okanogan</b>	<b>Trancare</b> Wenatchee, Washington	<b>VOICE:</b> (509) 667-2727 <b>FAX:</b> (509) 667-2083	<b>VOICE:</b> (800) 352-8726

## **Language Interpreter and Translator Code of Professional Conduct**

1. Accuracy

Interpreters/translators shall always thoroughly and faithfully render the source language message; omitting or adding nothing, giving consideration to linguistic variations in both source and target languages, and conserving the tone and spirit of the source language message.

2. Cultural Sensitivity -- Courtesy

Interpreters/translators shall be culturally competent, sensitive, and respectful of the individual(s) they serve.

3. Confidentiality

Interpreters/translators shall not divulge any information obtained through their assignments, including, but not limited to, information gained through access to documents or other written materials.

4. Disclosure

Interpreters/translators shall not publicly discuss, report, or offer an opinion concerning matters in which they are or have been engaged, even when that information is not privileged by law to be confidential.

5. Proficiency

Interpreters/translators shall meet the minimum proficiency standard set by DSHS by passing the required certification examination or screening evaluation.

6. Compensation

The fee schedule agreed to between the contracted language services providers and the department shall be the maximum compensation accepted. Interpreters/translators shall not accept additional money, considerations, or favors for services reimbursed by the department. Interpreters/translators shall not use for private or others' gain or advantage, the department's time or facilities, equipment or supplies, nor shall they use or attempt to use their position to secure privileges or exemptions.

7. Non-discrimination

Interpreters/translators shall always be neutral, impartial and unbiased. Interpreters/translators shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, national origin, age, socio-economic or educational status, or religious, political or sexual orientation. If interpreters/translators are unable to ethically perform in a given situation, the interpreters/translators shall refuse or withdraw from the assignment without threat of retaliation.

8. Self-evaluation

Interpreters/translators shall accurately and completely represent their certifications, training, and experience.

9. Impartiality -- Conflict of Interest

Interpreters/translators shall disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest which would affect their objectivity in the delivery of service. Providing interpreter translation services for family members or friends may violate the individual's right to confidentiality, constitute a conflict of interest, or violate a DSHS contract or subcontract.

10. Professional Demeanor

Interpreters/translators shall be punctual, prepared, and dressed in a manner appropriate, and not distracting, for the situation.

11. Scope of Practice

Interpreters/translators shall not counsel, refer, give advice, or express personal opinions to individuals for whom they are interpreting/translating, or engage in any other activities which may be construed to constitute a service other than interpreting/translating. Interpreters are prohibited from having unsupervised access to clients, including but not limited to phoning clients directly, other than at the request of a DSHS employee or DSHS-contracted service provider (e.g. medical provider). Interpreters are also prohibited from marketing their interpreter services to clients, including but not limited to arranging services or appointments for clients in order to create business for themselves. Additionally, interpreters shall not transport DSHS clients for any DSHS business, including social service or medical appointments.

12. Reporting Obstacles to Practice

Interpreters/translators shall assess at all times their ability to interpret/translate. Should interpreters/translators have any reservations about their competency, they must immediately notify the parties and offer to withdraw without threat of retaliation. Interpreters/translators may remain until more appropriate interpreters/translators can be secured.

13. Ethical Violations

Interpreters/translators shall immediately withdraw from encounters they perceive as violations of this Code. Any violation of the Code of Professional Conduct may cause termination of the contract and or prohibition from serving DSHS clients.

14. Professional Development

Interpreters/translators shall develop their skills and knowledge through professional training, continuing education, and interaction with colleagues and specialists in related fields.

**THIS CODE APPLIES TO ALL PERSONS PROVIDING LANGUAGE INTERPRETING OR TRANSLATION SERVICES AND MUST BE COMPLIED WITH AT ALL TIMES.**

## Interpreter Services

### Interpreter services:

- Must be provided only by DSHS-certified or qualified interpreters;
- Require all information to be kept confidential;
- Require the medical provider and client to decide together if an interpreter is needed;
- Must be arranged for by the medical provider; and
- Require the medical provider to cancel or change the interpreter appointment, if necessary, within 24 hours of the scheduled appointment.

### MAA covers interpreter services when all of the following are met:

- The LEP, deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing person is an eligible MAA client;
- The client and the medical provider have decided an interpreter is needed to access necessary medical and health care services covered by the client's MAA program; and
- The interpreter services (spoken languages) are provided by a DSHS contractor/subcontractor.

### MAA does not cover interpreter services when:

- Requested by someone other than the medical provider;
- Provided for medical services that are not medically necessary;
- Provided for services that are not covered by the client's MAA program;
- Provided by a family member;
- Not required by the medical provider to communicate with an MAA client (provider speaks same language as client); or
- Provided by an interpreter who is not qualified or certified.

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