

Provider Guidance: Requesting interpreters during COVID-19 State of Emergency

During the state of emergency HCA will offer over-the-phone (OPI) interpreters through Universal Language. This is the preferred method of interpretation, and providers are encouraged to request OPI whenever possible. Video-remote-interpreting (VRI) is not available through HCA's contract with Universal Language; however, providers can use their own video based technology and in-person interpreters can participate remotely.

Requesting over-the-phone interpreters

HCA encourages OPI as the primary method of interpreting. There are no additional requirements or restrictions for requesting OPI. Universal Language will facilitate the phone conferencing. See Universal Language's [Requester HCA OPI Guides](#) for more information.

Requesting in-person interpreters to participate remotely through video

HCA will allow in-person interpreters to interpret remotely, through video, when the provider is using their own video based technology. The provider is responsible for the technology including any needed technical assistance.

Requirements for requesting remote interpreters:

- Providers must have their own video technology/software.
- Providers must enter the link to the video in the "interpreter notes" field of the request.
- Providers must provide all technical assistance and troubleshooting for using the video technology/software.

Requesting in-person interpreters

In-person requests should only be made when the provider has used their clinical judgement to determine it is medically necessary to support the client's care needs. Examples of medical necessity include:

- Communicating nuances of body language when messaging would be complicated without in-person interpretation, such as unusually complex assessments, occupational therapy, or behavioral health.
- When phone interpretation could be disruptive to therapeutic care and services (e.g., Applied Behavioral Analysis).
- Procedures and care requiring the patient to move from room to room and the interpreter on the phone cannot follow the patient (e.g., radiology).
- End of life care.

Requirements for in-person interpreter requests

- Providers are expected to provide in-person interpreters with the same level of personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection control measures used by medical professionals in their facility.
- A description of PPE/safety precautions to be offered to the interpreter during an appointment must be entered in the 'Interpreter notes' field.
- Providers must comply with the [PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR: AMENDING AND EXTENDING PROCLAMATIONS 20-05 AND 20-24](#) which applies to in-person interpreters.
- Providers are expected to comply with the DOH [COVID-19 Infection Control Guidance for In-Person Interpretation Services](#), which applies to in-person interpreters.

Note: Interpreters are not required to accept in-person appointments if PPE/safety precautions are not offered during the appointment.