
	County of Sacramento Mental Health Division	Policy No.	QM-01-03
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AREA: ACCESS	TITLE: Interpretation Services by Family Members		
Approved by: (Signature on File) Signed version available upon request			
Uma Zykofsky, LCSW Program Manager, Quality Management Division of Behavioral Health Services	JoAnn Johnson, LCSW Program Manager, Cultural Competence Division of Behavioral Health Services		

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with California Code of Regulations Title 9, Chapter 11, the Sacramento County Mental Health Plan (MHP) is required to provide interpretation services for consumers. This provision is accomplished through a network of trained personnel within provider agencies, trained interpreters available to the MHP through other local sources and, to supplement these efforts within the County, the language line. Interpretive services are also provided for the hearing impaired through established contracted providers.

The MHP respects the confidentiality of consumer information in the provision of mental health services. Also respected is the sincere desire of family members of consumers to be helpful. The following policy demonstrates the responsibility of the MHP, through its providers, to provide interpretive services, while assisting providers to determine special circumstances when family members may be used as interpreters.

BACKGROUND

The provision of mental health services is very personal to the consumer. The consumer must be able to feel free to discuss all issues without reserving information that would be sensitive to other family members. Particular sensitivity is needed when working with adults and children of diverse cultural and ethnic community. Specialized terms are used in the mental health field that requires knowledge of the field to properly interpret. It is for these reasons that the MHP makes interpretation services available for all consumers and requires consumers to use these services.

The Access Team and other established MHP points of access provide direct access to interpretive services. The telephone numbers for the Access Team lines are printed in the MHP Member Handbook, which is published in the Sacramento County’s threshold languages. The Access Team lines also provide instructions for contacting TDD and TY services.

Many provider agencies have trained interpreters or other bilingual or multilingual staff who can provide interpretation services onsite.

POLICY

The Sacramento County Mental Health Plan is designed to provide interpretive services for all consumers. These services are performed by personnel who are trained in both interpretive services and the mental health field through use of special program interpreters, and through the language and TTY lines. Services are delivered onsite where mental health services are provided. The MHP prohibits the use of family members as interpreters, except in rare or extenuating circumstances.

Family members can be used as interpreters only in the following situations:

1. In emergencies where no other means of interpretation or communication are available.
2. When a consumer specifically chooses not to use a MHP interpreter and elects to use a family member for interpretation services, a Release of Information form must be signed by the consumer before the family member may be used as an interpreter. (See attached release form). Continued offers to provide an independent interpreter must not be excluded by this initial decision. Clinical decisions must always inform these efforts and may involve utilizing both family and independent interpreter in specific circumstances.

The MHP prohibits the use of children as interpreters in any circumstance. In the event of emergency situations, providers are always responsible to access alternative interpreter services to ensure that children are not placed in a position to make this decision.

IV. REFERENCES	Related Policies & Procedures	State/Federal Codes/Other References
	- Sacramento County Division of Mental Health Cultural Competence Plan - California Code of Regulations, Title 9 §1810.410	- No. 01-02 Use of Language Line by Quality Management Staff - No. 01-05 Cultural &/or Linguistic-Specific Community Services & Special Needs Request - No. 01-06 Access to Information by the Visually and Hearing Impaired
V. CONTACTS	Name	E-mail
		QMInformation@SacCounty.net
VI. SCOPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult Contract Providers
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Treatment Center	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children’s Contract Providers
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific grant/specialty resource	