

We'll say it for you...



Health
Western Sydney
Local Health District



**To assist the staff in applying Standard Procedures for Working with Health Care Interpreters, HCIS will provide in-service training to any unit or group of staff upon request. Sessions usually take 1-2 hours, and are*

conducted at times and venues to suit participants. To arrange an in-service session, contact HCIS.

What if WSLHD HCIS cannot provide requested services?

Despite the fact that WSLHD HCIS employs over 50 staff interpreters and has a panel of over 350 sessional interpreters, who combined speak over 120 languages, there might be times when WSLHD HCIS is unable to fulfil some requests. This usually happens when a new language emerges that is still not available on HCIS's panel, or when a short notice request comes in for a high demand language.

In these cases WSLHD HCIS will source interpreters from another government agency. In majority of cases it will be the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

All LHD staff who utilise WSLHD HCIS must contact WSLHD HCIS first (not TIS) for all their interpreting needs (onsite and telephone). Only when advised by HCIS operator that a Health Care Interpreter is not available, a caller will be transferred to TIS**.

In such cases, TIS will provide immediate telephone interpreting only. TIS Interpreters are not engaged for onsite interpreting in public health facilities.

**Restrictions regarding the use of TIS do not apply to non-LHD users who may have their own agreements with TIS.



HCIS
HEALTH CARE
INTERPRETER SERVICE

Book an Interpreter
24 Hour Service

(02) 9912 3800

or Email:

WSLHD-HCIS-InterpreterBookings@health.nsw.gov.au

or Fax:

(02) 9840 3789

e-Orders are also available to users from WSLHD, NBMLHD and St Joseph's Hospital

This pamphlet is issued by the

WSLHD Health Care Interpreter Service
Locked Bag 7118
Parramatta BC NSW 2124
Telephone (02) 9912 3800
Fax (02) 9840 3789

WSLHD-HealthCareInterpreterService@health.nsw.gov.au

WSLHD Health Care Interpreter Service

Working with Interpreters



HCIS
HEALTH CARE
INTERPRETER SERVICE

We'll say it for you...

WSLHD Health Care Interpreter Service



WSLHD Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) is the major provider of interpreting services for health care providers (HCP) in the following local health districts: Western Sydney, Nepean/Blue Mountains, and Northern Sydney, the Children's Hospital at Westmead, St Joseph's Hospital as well as a number of non-government organisations (NGOs) and some external agencies. The aim of the service is to assist clients from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background to access health services by providing professional and confidential interpreting services that facilitate communication between CALD consumers and the HCP.

Services are available in over 120 languages, including AUSLAN (Australian Sign Language) for the Deaf clients. The service employs over 50 staff interpreters and has a pool of over 350 sessional interpreters. HCIS interpreters are highly trained and accredited or recognised by National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) except for some rare languages in which accreditation or recognition is not available in Australia; they understand medical terminology and are bound by the professional Code of Ethics.

Why should HCP use professional interpreters?

Professional interpreters must be used in all patient care settings to promote effective communication, ensure quality and safety in patient care and to minimise potential adverse events.

NSW Health has issued a Policy Directive, Standard Procedures for Working with Health Care Interpreters, which must be adhered to by all staff across all NSW health services. The Policy Directive states:

“It is NSW Government policy that professional health care



interpreters be used to facilitate communication between people who are not fluent in English, including people who are Deaf, and the staff on the NSW public health system. The use of professional interpreters allows health professionals to fulfill their duty of care, including obtaining valid consent. The Policy Directive describes the roles and functions of the Health Care Interpreter Service, situations in which interpreters must be used, what to do if an interpreter is not available, and the responsibilities of health care providers when using interpreters.”

For all CALD patients whose language spoken at home is not English, professional interpreters must be used for admission, medical histories, assessments, treatment plans, consent for procedures, pre-operative and post-operative instructions, explanation of medication, counseling, discharge and basically anything more than simple matters of patient comfort.

A full copy of the policy can be obtained by contacting HCIS or visiting the NSW Health website:
http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2006/pdf/PD2006_053.pdf

Family members, relatives, friends or bilingual staff should not be used as interpreters

Use of non-professional interpreters is not just a breach of the Standard Procedures, but also a breach of the duty of care owed to the patient, and could result in legal action.

Family members, relatives and friends can be emotionally involved and tend to filter the information. Their language skills are not tested and they are not trained in medical terminology. Most importantly, they are not bound by the Code of Ethics and there is no guarantee of confidentiality, impartiality or professional conduct.



Bilingual staff members, who are fluent in a community language, are encouraged to deliver their own service directly in their own language, without using an interpreter but they should not be utilised as interpreters. Although they are not emotionally involved, their language ability and interpreting skills and techniques are not tested and they may not possess the necessary knowledge of medical terminology.

Remember: *Consent to treatment will not be valid if it is obtained through a child or family members, other patients, visitors or staff acting as interpreters.*

Services provided by WSLHD HCIS

HCIS is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week for both **on site** and **telephone interpreting**. Other services include:

- Interpreting for groups (i.e. educational sessions)
- Calling patients on behalf of HCP to advise them of a new appointment or a change to an existing one
- Provision of information regarding clients' cultural background to HCP
- Limited translation services (i.e. patients' health related documents only for HCP's use)
- Orientation training for new LHD employees on how to work with interpreters
- In service training sessions* as requested by various service users
- Professional training for interpreters
- Work experience placements for TAFE or university students in Interpreting and Translating Courses.
- Training for medical students in the second or third year of Medical School on how to work with Interpreters.
- Videoconference Interpreting may be available in the near future.