

Interpreter Services

Program overview

Access to quality health care and patient safety depend on effective communication. Health Care Authority (HCA) is committed to expanding and improving language assistance services for Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) clients that are limited English proficiency (LEP), Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing.

[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) requires health care providers to assure language access. The Interpreter Services (IS) program provides access to scheduling spoken and sign language interpreters at no additional cost to contracted providers. Spoken language and sign language requests have been separated into two contracts to ensure clients receive an appropriate interpreter match.

How do providers request interpreter services?

- Request spoken language interpreters through our contract with [Universal Language Service](#) (Universal).
- Request sign language interpreters through the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) master contract utilizing the [online request system](#).

Who is eligible to utilize HCAs Interpreter Services contracts?

Apple Health eligible clients and Apple Health enrolled providers that have current Core Provider Agreements can utilize the IS contracts.

What services are available through Universal?

- In-person interpretation through DSHS certified, authorized, and recognized interpreters
- Receives, schedules, and responds to request for interpreter services through an online scheduling system
- Eligibility request screening (provider, client, services)
- Pays interpreters for services provided

What services are available through DES/ODHH?

- In-person interpretation with certified, authorized, and recognized sign language and tactile interpreters
- Increased ability to best match interpreters with Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing clients.
- Accepts requests through online request system (effective 3/1/21).

Who is eligible to receive these services?

Active Apple Health clients with a benefit service package that includes interpreter services.

About the sign language transition

HCA transitioned sign language from Universal to the state sign language master contract effective January 1, 2020. This transition improves Apple Health clients' access to sign language interpreters, removes language access inequities through better communication matches, and separates sign language from spoken language services.

For more information on Interpreter Services please visit the [Interpreter Services webpage](#).

For information on the sign language transition please visit the [Sign language interpreter contract transition webpage](#).

Contact us at: [HCA Interpreter Services](#)