

We'll say it for you...



- In service training sessions* as requested by various service users
- Professional training for interpreters
- Calling clients on behalf of HCP to advise them of a new appointment or a

change to an existing one.

HCIS also offers work experience placements for TAFE or university students in Interpreting and Translating Courses.

**To assist the staff in applying the Standard Procedures for the Use of Health Care Interpreters, the HCIS will provide in-service training to any unit or group of staff upon request. Sessions usually take 1-1½ hours, and are conducted at times and venues to suit participants. To arrange an in-service session, contact HCIS.*

What if SWAHS HCIS cannot provide requested services?

Despite the fact that HCIS has a pool of 300 contractors and more than 40 full time staff interpreters who combined can speak over 120 languages, there might be times when HCIS will not be able to fulfil some requests. This usually happens when a new language emerges that is still not available on the panel, or when a short notice request comes in for a high demand language.

In these cases HCIS will refer a requestor to TIS (Translating and Interpreting Service), which has been a reliable back up service for many years.

SWAHS staff need to be aware that they must contact HCIS first for all their telephone and on-site interpreting needs. Only when advised by HCIS that a Health Care Interpreter is not available, they will be referred to contact TIS, which can be used for telephone interpreting only. However, SWAHS staff who request TIS interpreters on site should be aware that their department would be responsible for the cost of such a session.

Restrictions regarding use of TIS do not apply to other non-SWAHS users.

How to book an interpreter?

Call us on 9840 3456

or

Fax: 9840 3789

Email: hcis@wsahs.nsw.gov.au



This pamphlet is issued by the
SWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service
Locked Bag 7118
Parramatta BC NSW 2150

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Intranet: <http://westnet/services/hcis/index.htm>

SWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service

Working with Interpreters



We'll say it for you...

SWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service



SWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) is the major provider of interpreting and translating services for health care providers (HCP) in Sydney West Area Health Service (SWAHS), the Children's Hospital

at Westmead, a number of non-government organisations (NGOs) as well as 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. The provision of this service assists in facilitating 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 40 staff interpreters/translators and has a pool of over 300 contractors. Our interpreters/translators are highly trained and accredited by National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), 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 the Use of Health Care Interpreters*, which must be adhered to by all staff across all NSW Area 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:
www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2006/PD2006_053.html

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 are encouraged to deliver their own service directly in their own language, without using an interpreter but they should not be used 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 SWAHS HCIS

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

- Video-conferencing
- Interpreting for groups
- Translation of patients' health related documents for HCP's use
- Provision of information regarding clients' cultural background to HCP
- Orientation training for new SWAHS employees on how to work with interpreters