

POLICY	Manual: Administrative	Section: Admin	Code No.: A D005	Old Code No.: A D05
Title: Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing Clients – Support for			Original Effective Date: Feb 02, 2002	
			Review/Revised Effective Date: Dec 11, 2013	
			Next Review Date: Dec 01, 2016	
Cross Index: Accessibility policies, Interpreter Services, Support for Hard of Hearing Clients (procedure)	Authoring Committee/Program/Dept: Professional Practice		Approved By: AMC	

Southlake Regional Health Centre recognizes the rights of all individuals to informed and safe participation in their treatment plan and is committed to providing clear, barrier free communication for patients/Substitute Decision Makers (SDMs) and the patient's support person(s) who are culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

It is the responsibility of Southlake to locate and provide communication support services and assistive devices in accordance with the **preferred mode of communication indicated by the patient/SDM and the patient's support person(s)**. Communication support services and devices currently available at or through Southlake include:

- Sign Language Interpretation
- Pocket talkers
- NoteTakers
- Teletypewriters (TTYs)
- Closed Caption TV
- Volunteer Guides

Information on all the above services is available through Locating by dialing "0" and the costs of these services and devices are covered by Southlake.

Hearing Toolkits are available to patients and provide information that can be used to improve communication between patients and staff during hospital visits. Patients can request a Toolkit when admitted to the hospital or if entering through Emergency, Surgery, Diagnostic Imaging, Rehabilitation, Obstetric Departments or other clinical areas.

Oral and sign language and deaf interpretation services are provided through a certified Sign Language Interpreter for both inpatients and outpatients, their SDMs or the patient's support

person(s). If an interpreter is not available right away, or when a delay may compromise care, staff may utilize another staff member who can communicate using ASL, or a pen and paper, or other appropriate method(s), for communication. Note: Certified interpreters follow a nationally established code of ethics. They are impartial, professional and do not edit information. **Sign Language, Oral and Deaf Interpreters are not visitors and are not restricted to visiting hours. Interpreters will be allowed unrestricted access to clients whenever possible.**

All agencies or parties contracted by Southlake to provide such services are required to sign the [Confidentiality Agreement for Vendors/Third Party Contractors with Access to Confidential Information](#) and abide by the conditions outlined therein.

Definitions:

Culturally Deaf: This term refers to individuals who identify with and participate in the language, culture and community of Deaf people, based on sign language. Deaf culture does not perceive hearing loss and deafness from a pathological point of view, but rather from a socio-cultural point of view, indicated by a capital D as in "Deaf culture." Culturally Deaf people may also use speech, residual hearing, hearing aids, speech reading and gesturing to communicate with people who do not sign.

Oral deaf: This term is generally used to describe individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no residual hearing. Some deaf people use sign language, such as American Sign Language (ASL) or Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) to communicate. Others use speech to communicate using their residual hearing and hearing aids, technical devices or cochlear implants, and/or speech reading.

Deafened or late-deafened: These terms describe individuals who grow up hearing or hard of hearing and, either suddenly or gradually, experience a profound loss of hearing. Late-deafened adults usually cannot understand speech without visual clues such as captioning/computerized note taking, speech reading or sign language.

Hard of hearing: This term is generally used to describe individuals who use spoken language (their residual hearing and speech) to communicate. Most hard of hearing people can understand some speech sounds with or without hearing aids and often supplement their residual hearing with speech reading, hearing aids and technical devices. The term "person with hearing loss" is increasingly used and preferred.

References:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2001, 2003
- Supreme Court of Canada (1997). Eldridge vs. British Columbia
- The Canadian Hearing Society (Simcoe York Branch)