



## **Kaiser Permanente's Language Assistance Program**

All providers need to cooperate and comply with Kaiser Permanente's (KP) Language Assistance Program by assisting any limited English proficient (LEP) member with access to KP's Language Assistance Program services.

Providers must ensure that members receive effective, understandable, and respectful care that is provided in a manner compatible with their cultural health beliefs, practices, and preferred language. Providers should offer language assistance to members who appear to need it even if they do not ask for it or if their language preference was not indicated on the referral form. Should a LEP member refuse to access KP's language interpreter services, the provider must document that refusal in the member's medical record.

### **Using Qualified Bilingual Staff**

Our expectation is that you will provide interpreter services in-person using your own qualified bilingual staff if you have them. Your qualified bilingual staff should meet the regulatory standards set out in KP's minimum quality standards for interpreters:

- Documented and demonstrated proficiency in both English and the other language
- Fundamental knowledge in both languages of health care terminology and concepts
- Education and training in interpreting ethics, conduct and confidentiality

### **When Qualified Bilingual Staff Is Not Available**

In the event that you do not have qualified bilingual staff at the time services are needed, KP has made the following arrangements available to providers when providing services to members. KP will directly reimburse the companies below for interpreter services provided to members. Neither members nor providers will be billed by these companies for interpreter services.

### **Telephone Interpretation**

Language Line is a company with the capability to provide telephonic interpreter services in over 140 different languages. Phone interpreter services are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week through the Language Line by calling: **(888) 898-1301**. This phone number is dedicated to the interpreter needs of members. While no lead



time is needed to engage an interpreter through this service, providers must have the following data elements available before placing the call:

- The KP Client ID number. This number will be provided to you, in writing, together with your authorization
- KP referral or authorization number
- Member's MRN

If you require access to language assistance for a KP member but were not provided a KP Client ID number with your authorization, please contact the referral staff who issued the authorization for a KP Client ID number. Language Line Customer Service can be reached at **(800) 752-6096** Option #2 between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. PT, Monday through Friday. After hours and weekends, access Option #1 and request a supervisor. In addition, Language Line offers an online support tool called "Voice of the Customer" (VOC) to enter an issue (<http://www.languageline.com/page/voc/>). You will receive an instant receipt acknowledgement and a follow-up response within 48 hours.

### American Sign Language Support

KP contracts with multiple companies to provide in-person interpreter services for members requiring American Sign Language (ASL). In-person interpreter services require a minimum of 24 hours lead time for scheduling and are available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. In-person interpreters are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT.

The Kaiser Permanente contracted American Sign Language companies:

Company	Customer Service/Scheduling	Cancellation Policy
Interpreting and Consulting Services, Inc.	1-888-617-0016	Appointments must be cancelled 24 hours in advance of appointment
Partners in Communication LLC	1-800-975-8150	Appointments must be cancelled 48 hours in advance of appointment
Bay Area Communication Access	1-415-356-0405	Appointments must be cancelled 24 hours in advance of appointment



Providers may arrange in-person interpreter services for multiple dates of service with one call, but must have the following data elements available before placing the call to schedule:

- KP referral or authorization number
- Member's MRN
- Date(s) of member's appointment(s)
- Time and duration of each appointment
- Specific address and location of appointment(s)
- Any access or security measures the interpreter will need to know and plan for to gain entry to the place of service
- Any cancellation should be made at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled appointment

## **Documentation**

Providers need to note the following in the member's medical record:

- that language assistance was offered to an LEP member
- if the language assistance was refused by the member
- type of service that was utilized (telephonic, in-person interpreter services, or bilingual staff), for those members who accept language assistance

Providers must capture information necessary for KP to assess compliance, and cooperate with KP by providing access to that information upon reasonable request.

## **Family Members as Interpreters**

The KP Language Assistance Program does not prohibit adult family members from serving as interpreters for members; however, using family members to interpret is discouraged. Members must first be offered language assistance and informed of the benefits of using professional language assistance. If after that offer, the member refuses and prefers to use a family member, that refusal must be documented in the member's medical record. Minor children should not be used as interpreters, except in extraordinary situations such as medical emergencies where any delay could result in harm to a patient, and only until a qualified interpreter is available.