



Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Developmental Disabilities Guidelines for Use/Billing of Interpreters

The following guidelines are identified to assist community behavioral health treatment providers (Provider) contracted with the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health, when providing American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH).

Contractual Requirements

The State of Missouri, Office of Administration, has a statewide contract for ASL interpreting services entitled "Sign Language Interpreter Services" that Providers may use in locating ASL interpreters. The contract provides county level contact information for ASL interpreting resources. This contract can be found at archive.oa.mo.gov/purch/contracts or a copy may be requested from the Department of Mental Health's Office of Deaf Services at deafservices@dmh.mo.gov. In the Kansas City and St. Louis regions, additional interpreting contracts have been established with interpreters that have undergone specialized training in the field of mental health interpreting. For information on these contracts, including how to contact the agencies listed, please contact the Office of Deaf Services at deafservices@dmh.mo.gov.

A. Usage of ASL Interpreters

1. With the exception of crisis and/or emergency situations, ASL Interpreters should be requested at least 48 hours prior to the assignment.
2. In accordance with section 209, RSMo and 5 CSR 100-200.100, interpreters that are used for mental health assignments shall be licensed and certified in the state of Missouri. Interpreters for the Department of Mental Health (DMH) shall have a certification level of Comprehensive or Advanced and preference will be given to those interpreters that have completed the Introduction to Mental Health Interpreting training found at dmh.mo.gov/deafservices/training. For information on interpreters that have completed this training, please contact the Office of Deaf Services at deafservices@dmh.mo.gov. Friends and family are **not** allowed to serve as sign language interpreters.
3. ASL interpreting is a physically and mentally taxing occupation that may require a team of more than one interpreter for longer assignments. In the event an ASL interpreter is needed for 2 hours or longer, the interpreter agency will be allowed to use their discretion on the need for more than one interpreter.

4. Although it is not possible to identify every potential instance of a dangerous situation, Providers will inform the interpreting agency/interpreter of known potentially dangerous situations, including behaviors of the consumer(s). The interpreting agency/interpreter will have the right to decline the assignment based on comfort level with the situation.
5. It is best practice to provide an ASL Interpreter for every mental health situation encountered. DOR 4.141 **requires** providing an interpreter for the following categories of service when provided directly to a D/HH consumer:
 - Any screening, assessment, or re-assessment, whether done for the purposes of determining eligibility for services, diagnosis, or for the development or modification of a plan of treatment;
 - Any treatment planning or discharge planning meetings, or the preparation for such meetings;
 - An individual psychotherapy/psychoeducational session;
 - A group psychotherapy/psychoeducational session;
 - An individual substance use counseling session;
 - A group substance use counseling session.

In addition, an interpreter shall be provided for a D/HH parent or guardian involved with a consumer's treatment and their treatment decision making.

6. If a consumer, parent, or guardian wants to waive their right to the use of a sign language interpreter in conjunction with services they are receiving, the consumer, parent, or guardian must complete a Waiver of Interpreter Services. This waiver may be found on the Office of Deaf Services website at dmh.mo.gov/deafservices/providers or a copy may be requested from the Office of Deaf Services at deafservices@dmh.mo.gov. To help identify and document the need for sign language interpreting services for a consumer, the Communication Profile may be used. This Communication Profile may be found at dmh.mo.gov/deafservices/providers or by requesting a copy from the Office of Deaf Services at the above mentioned email address.

B. Funding for ASL Interpreting Costs

1. Sign language interpreters are funded by the local Regional Offices for intake and eligibility purposes, person centered planning meetings such as annual, discharge and amending plan services **only**. These costs are written into the consumer's individual plan and approved through Utilization Review. Funds for sign language interpreters will be provided by the Regional Office's General Revenue (GR) or Expense and Equipment (E&E) budget at the discretion of the Regional Office.
2. If an interpreter is needed for a service, other than what is described above (B.1), then the TCM entity will either fund the interpreter or will locate a provider with sign fluent staff to directly provide the service.
3. In the Division of Developmental Disabilities, sign language interpreting is considered a POS service and is **not** a waiver service.

4. Interpreting agencies/interpreters may bill 2-hour minimum fees as this is considered standard practice in the ASL Interpreting field. When referencing the state/local contract the fee includes the interpreter agency/interpreter's rate plus mileage. ASL Interpreting assignments that continue longer than the standard 2-hour minimum shall be billed, from the ASL Interpreter, prorated to the quarter hour rather than being rounded to the next full hour.
5. If an interpreting assignment that was requested by the Provider is cancelled with 24 hours or more notice, neither the Provider nor the Regional Office is responsible for any costs associated with the interpreting agency/interpreter. If an assignment that was requested by the Provider is cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice, the interpreting agency/interpreter may bill the Provider a 2-hour minimum fee; however, this will be not be paid by the Regional Office.
6. If the interpreting assignment is cancelled due to a client not showing for their appointment, the costs associated will still be need to be paid.
7. If an interpreter is requested by a Provider and that interpreter does not show up for the appointment, then neither the Provider nor the Regional Office is responsible for any costs associated.

For any further questions or comments, please contact the Office of Deaf Services at deafservices@dmh.mo.gov or by phone at 573-526-1857 – voice, 573-298-6764 – videophone.