
Sign Language Interpretation

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This section contains policy related to sign language interpretation services.

Sign Language Interpreter Overview

Sign language interpreter services are a benefit to facilitate effective communication with deaf or hearing-impaired Medi-Cal recipients.

The following services are reimbursable:

- Communication between a deaf or hearing-impaired Medi-Cal recipient and a Medi-Cal-enrolled provider during the course of a medically necessary health care examination or other procedure
- Communication between a deaf or hearing-impaired adult representative of the Medi-Cal recipient and a Medi-Cal-enrolled provider when necessary to facilitate medically necessary health services for the recipient
- Communication between a deaf or hearing-impaired adult who receives services or training on behalf of the recipient and the Medi-Cal-enrolled provider who renders the medically necessary health care services to the recipient

Provider Guidelines

Sign language interpreter services are reimbursable only to providers or provider groups employing fewer than 15 people.

Health Facility Limitations

Sign language interpreter services are not covered for recipients receiving these services in a health facility that is required by law to provide sign language interpreter services.

Interpreter Services Guidelines

Sign language interpreter services as defined in *California Code of Regulations (CCR)*, Title 22, Section 51098.5, may be used for, but are not limited to, the following:

- Obtaining medical history
- Obtaining informed consent and permission for treatment
- Explaining diagnosis, treatment and prognosis of an illness
- Communicating prior to, during and after medical procedures
- Providing complex instructions regarding medication
- Explaining instructions for care upon discharge from a medical facility
- Providing mental health assessment, therapy or counseling

The individual providing sign language interpreter services must:

- Not be related to the recipient
- Possess the ability to receive, interpret and communicate information effectively, accurately and impartially in a medical setting, as determined by both the recipient and the provider
- Be non-certified or hold certification by one of the following:
 - The National Registration of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)
 - The National Association of Deaf (NAD)/California Association of the Deaf (CAD) at competency Level IV or V only
 - The California Department of Rehabilitation at competency Level III and possess a certificate from RID or NAD/CAD at competency Level IV or V only

Note: In an emergency or acute care situation, the provider may select the interpreter.

Reimbursable HCPCS Codes

The following HCPCS codes are reimbursable for sign language interpreter services.

Authorization

Authorization is not required.

HCPCS Code	Description	Frequency
T1013	Sign language or oral interpretive services, per 15 minutes	Maximum of 32 units billed

Billing

Providers must document that they employ fewer than 15 employees in the *Remarks* field (Box 80)/*Additional Claim Information* field (Box 19) or on a claim attachment. Sign language interpreter services may not be billed using the “from-through” format.

Revenue code 0969 (other professional fees) is used to bill sign language interpreter services. Certified sign language interpreters may bill with modifier HM (less than bachelor degree level).

<<Legend>>

<<Symbols used in the document above are explained in the following table.>>

Symbol	Description
<<	This is a change mark symbol. It is used to indicate where on the page the most recent change begins.
>>	This is a change mark symbol. It is used to indicate where on the page the most recent change ends.