



Top Ten Reasons to Hire a Staff Interpreter

Is your hospital relying solely on remote interpreting? Perhaps it is time to think of having a language services mix, which includes staff interpreters, per diem interpreters, remote interpreting services, and partnerships with language service providers. The following are the top ten reasons to hire staff interpreters.

1. **Faster access:** Staff interpreters are always on site and ready to provide assistance in STAT situations.
2. If a hospital can anticipate a certain number of encounters per day in a particular language, it can determine if it is more cost effective to have a dedicated staff interpreter during the times where those specific language services are most needed versus calling in interpreters with a two or three-hour minimum for one appointment.
3. There are situations where an on site interpreter is the best way to provide language services to the patient. There are many situations that are not well-suited for remote interpreting. These include, to name a few: giving bad news; long interactions; family meetings, procedures that require demonstrations; settings that prevent the patient from being close to a telephone/monitor; and situations where visual cues may be especially important, such as patient education, teaching scenarios and mental health encounters.
4. Some patients will travel long distances to go to an institution that employs dedicated staff medical interpreters due to their preference for a more personalized service.
5. Humans rely heavily on visual perception. The interpreter's visual interaction with the patient allows for a better experience of understanding. Subsequently, the patient's comfort level increases because the staff interpreter becomes a known health care professional in their network of health care services.
6. Patients may have more chances of working with a particular staff interpreter in a health organization that employs staff interpreters, allowing for a professional rapport with the patient to build.
7. Staff interpreters understand the healthcare environment and infrastructure they work in. This gives them the ability to act as patient navigators, where and when appropriate.
8. Staff interpreters develop working rapports with other on-site healthcare professionals, bringing about a teamwork approach to provide a more integrated and patient-centered care for culturally and linguistically diverse patients.
9. Staff interpreters have greater context on the patient's situation, if they have interpreted for the same patient numerous times. The greater the context of the situation, the higher the quality of the interpretation.
10. The on site availability of staff interpreters contributes to the reduction of medical malpractice lawsuits. However, when an on site interpreter is not available, or is delayed, refusal to utilize remote interpreting (phone/video) or waiting for an on site interpreter due to preference, can contribute to negative health outcomes.