Video Interpretation
Best Practices

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Goals for This Presentation:

• Rules and regulations surrounding video interpretation
• When to use VRI
• How to make a hospital VRI policy
• VRI best practices
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Healthcare Language Services for 6+ Years

Marketing Manager @CyraCom

VRI Researcher & Writer
Who's in the Room?

Employee Interpreters?
Agency Interpreters?
Interpreter Managers?
People Who Don’t Like to Raise Their Hand?
Live/Work in MA?
Who’s in the Room?

How many of you currently use VR? 

How many of you are considering VR?
Clip: HBO's “Getting On” TV Show
Why Use VR?

- May provide needed languages to rural areas
- May be faster in certain situations
- May help in-person interpreters focus on critical patient encounters
- May provide cost savings
Wheaton Franciscan Data

Case Study of “Cost Per Patient Encounter”

*Wheaton Franciscan, seven hospital system in Milwaukee*

**Modality of Interpretation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Cost per Encounter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency Interpreters “Lesser Diffusion”</td>
<td>$109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Interpretation</td>
<td>$32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Interpretation</td>
<td>$7.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual % of Patient Encounters**

- Employees, 59%
- Telephonic, 20%
- Agency, 21%

**Annual Expense by Interpreter Service**

- Employees, 44%
- Agency, 52%
Rules and Regulations

What does the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) think about VRI?

“VRI is a tool that may be used by hospitals and other medical entities to ensure immediate communication access”

But
• On-site interpreters should be used first
• If VRI is used, make sure you consider policy, procedure, and technology.

https://nad.org/issues/technology/vri/position-statement-hospitals
What does the Joint Commission say about VRI?

Nothing!

Joint Commission standards require “qualified” interpreters for effective communication

Auditors may check to see if you are following hospital policy on when to use VRI
What does the Department of Justice think of VRI?

- Entities can choose VRI or on-site
- VRI can be useful in rural areas where on-site interpreters may be difficult to obtain.
- May be cost advantages

However,
- “VRI will not be effective in all circumstances”

http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm
Considerations

DOJ (continued)

- High-Speed Connection
- Clear Video
- Clear Sound
- Staff Training

http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm
Considerations

DOJ (continued)

- Give primary consideration to the choice requested by the patient. The state or local government must honor the person’s choice, unless it can demonstrate that another equally effective means of communication is available, or that the use of the means chosen would result in an undue burden.

- The goal is to provide an aid or service that will be effective.

http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm
Where does VRI work?

- Deaf / Hard of Hearing
- ED
- Off-site locations where on-site staff can’t travel
- Outpatient (i.e. clinics)
- Inpatient (various departments)
Better question: Where *doesn’t* VRI work?

- Acute mental illness
- Sensitive news
- Surgery
- Areas with poor connectivity
- Limited access to a device
- Lack of support and training on how to use VRI
VRI can be used *whenever* the patient feels they can communicate effectively.
Considerations

Create a Policy for VR:

• When to use
  – Employee
  – Agency
  – Phone
  – Video

• VR is not intended to take jobs from in-person interpreters
VRI Success Checklist

• Create a data-based case for VRI
• Create a Language Access Plan
• Gain executive Buy-In
• Find internal champion
• Get IT involved early
• Enlist vendor support
• Train Staff
Equipment Considerations

- Screen Size
- Integrated Webcam + Speakers
- Portability
- Security
- Charging
- VRI App
IT Considerations

- Firewall
- Bandwidth
- QoS
- Wi-Fi Reach
Equipment

- Store VR carts where they are available 24/7, but secure
- Place one unit in ED
- Additional units in areas of higher usage
- AoD/Nurse Manager in charge of VR unit
- Check back in for charging
Staff Training Checklist

- Take advantage of new hires training and internal annual competencies days
  - Have staff sign document
- Hold a day-long training session with planned half-hour demonstrations and breaks for unplanned walk-ins for busy physicians.
  - Hands-on demonstrations
  - Shows how quickly it connects
- Create informational flyers and quick access pages with information like:
  - Hospital Interpreter Policies
  - How to access
  - Other laws and regulations regarding language services
- Place log-in instructions on each phone and VRi cart
Using VRI

- Position unit in front of the patient so they see the screen
- Nurse/Doctor stands behind or right next to the screen
- Maximize window
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