Protocol for how to access interpreting services

Face-to-face, over-the-phone, and American Sign Language

Why does Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan provide free interpreting services?

Federal law requires that healthcare providers who see government program recipients provide free language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and who are hard-of-hearing or deaf. To help you meet this legal requirement, Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan (Blue Shield Promise) is providing over-the-phone, face-to-face, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting services at no cost to Blue Shield Promise providers and members.

When are over-the-phone interpreting services recommended?

- When you identify a patient with limited English proficiency (LEP) and the patient is already present at the office, telephone interpretation should be used immediately to avoid any delay in service.
- Whenever a patient with LEP requests it.

Telephone interpretation is available on demand, 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK.

How do I initiate over-the-phone interpreting services?

Call ISI at **1 (833) 220-8015** – Client ID# 34094

An ISI customer service agent will ask for the following information:

- Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan ID# (subscriber ID#)
- Language needed
- County

1. **If your office has after-hours answering services:** Please ensure that staff know how to connect to an interpreter over the telephone using the information provided above.
2. **If your office has on-call physicians/nurses:** Ensure that they know how to connect to an interpreter over the telephone using the information provided above.

Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan is an independent licensee of the Blue Shield Association

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When are face-to-face and American Sign Language interpreting services recommended?

- To explain complex medical conditions or provide education (i.e., medical diagnoses, treatment options, insulin instructions, etc.) to a member with LEP or who is hard-of-hearing or deaf.
- Whenever a patient requests these services.

All requests must be made 5 business days prior to the appointment. We will try our best to accommodate the request if it's submitted less than 5 business days in advance. Please contact the Blue Shield Promise Customer Service Department for further assistance:

Medi-Cal (Los Angeles)	(800) 605-2556 (TTY: 711)
Medi-Cal (San Diego)	(855) 699-5557 (TTY: 711)

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Please contact the Blue Shield Promise Customer Service Department at least 48 hours in advance if the appointment has been CANCELLED or RESCHEDULED.

When is California Relay Service (TTY/Telecommunication Device for Deaf - TDD) recommended?

- When you or your office staff need to communicate with members who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please call California Relay Service:

English	(800) 735-2922 (TTY: 711)
Spanish	(800) 855-3000 (TTY: 711)

- When your patients who are deaf, hard of hearing, or experiencing a speech disability need assistance to call your office or Blue Shield Promise, please dial:

English	(800) 735-2922 (TTY: 711)
Spanish	(800) 855-3000 (TTY: 711)

Video remote interpretation (VRI)

VRI services are available through our language vendor ISI. If you use these services, federal guidelines require that services must provide: real-time full-motion and audio over a dedicated high-speed, wide bandwidth video connection or wireless connection that delivers high-quality audio without lags or irregular pauses in communication; video images that do not produce lags, choppy, blurry, or grainy images, or irregular pauses in communication; a sharply delineated image that is large enough to display the interpreter's face, arms, hands, and fingers, and the participating individual's face, arms, hands, and fingers, regardless of

body position; a clear, audible transmission of voices; and adequate training to users of the technology and other involved individuals so that they may quickly and efficiently set up and operate the remote interpreting services.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND:

1. Always document the member's preferred language in the member's medical record.
2. Always document the request or refusal of interpreting services in the member's medical record.
3. Always post an "Interpreting Services" sign at key medical and non-medical points of contact.
4. Please discourage patients from using friends and family members as interpreters unless the member requests it after being informed about the availability of the free interpreter services.