Interpreter Services
FAQs for Providers

Use the following FAQs during pre-scheduling of in-person/onsite interpretation (OSI) and/or video remote interpretation (VRI) services. These interpretation services support active members with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) spoken language and/or ASL (Sign Language/Tactile). All interpreters are qualified professionals trained to facilitate accurate, confidential, and impartial communication in healthcare settings.

As the provider, how do I request an interpreter for a patient?

- Both members and providers may contact the health plan directly by phone for assistance.
- Providers may also request an interpreter by completing an interpreter request form available on the Health Plan's website. Once completed, email the form to the Interpreter Services department at InterpreterRequests@centene.com.
- Whenever possible, interpreter requests should be submitted at least **five (5) business days in advance.**

How far in advance can I submit the request?

- Requests can be submitted at any time, but we recommend at least five (5) business days in advance to ensure availability.
- For recurring appointments (such as ongoing therapy), please indicate this in your request so Interpreter Services can coordinate consistent interpreter coverage.

Can I submit a last-minute request?

- Yes, last-minute requests can be submitted; however, coverage may not be guaranteed due to interpreter availability.

How do I request a specific interpreter?

The request form includes a "Preferred Interpreter" field where you may specify the interpreter's name, if known. You may also indicate if a patient prefers a specific gender interpreter (e.g., for sensitive appointments).

- **Preferred:** A specific interpreter or gender is requested. If the preferred interpreter is unavailable, another qualified interpreter may be assigned.
- **Required:** Only the specified interpreter or gender may be assigned. No substitution is permitted.
  - **Note:** If the required interpreter or gender is unavailable, the appointment may need to be rescheduled.

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What if I'm seeing multiple siblings who all need interpretation? Do I need to request an interpreter for each child individually?

- For sibling appointments that will take place together or in a "back-to-back" fashion, a single interpreter request is sufficient—please clearly indicate in the request that it is for multiple siblings.

If siblings have separate appointments (different dates/time and/or provider), please submit individual interpreter requests for each to ensure coverage and proper documentation.

Will the interpreter arrive with the patient?

The interpreter will arrive separately from the patient and will check in at the front desk of the appointment location. Interpreters do not escort members or provide transportation.

What should I do if the interpreter is late or if there seems to be a problem?

- If an interpreter has not arrived by the appointment time or if there are any concerns about the service, please contact Interpreter Services. They can check the interpreter's status or provide alternate arrangements.

How do I cancel an interpreter appointment?

- Interpreter appointments can be cancelled by emailing the Interpreter Services at InterpreterRequests@centene.com or by calling the provider services department with the relevant details.
- Please provide at least 24 hours' notice when cancelling an interpreter appointment whenever possible. This allows us to reassign interpreters efficiently and maintain service availability.

Will I be billed for these services?

- Interpretation services are a covered benefit for members; providers will not be billed.

Is there a way I can get in direct contact with the interpreter before or after the patient encounter?

- To maintain professionalism, neutrality, and confidentiality, direct contact with interpreters outside of patient encounters is discouraged. For any necessary communication, please contact Interpreter Services.

When will I receive confirmation for the interpreter appointment?

Confirmation times vary based on urgency and scheduling volume.

- For appointments requested 24–48 hours in advance, confirmations are usually sent within that timeframe.
- Urgent requests are prioritized for fulfillment, and the Interpreter Services team will provide notice as soon as interpreter coverage is secured, depending on interpreter availability.

What should I do if the patient expresses discomfort/dissatisfaction with the interpreter?

- Acknowledge their concern and reassure them they may request a different interpreter.
- Contact Interpreter Services promptly to arrange an alternative interpreter.
- Document the patient's feedback and request in the medical record.

What languages are available through interpretation services?

- We offer interpretation in many languages, including Spanish, Chinese (dialects), Arabic, Vietnamese, American Sign Language (ASL), and more. For less common languages, we partner with third-party vendors.
  - ► **Note:** For rare languages and ASL, interpreter resources can be limited. It may be necessary to consider a video or phone interpreter in those cases to allow the appointment to go forward. Our team will guide you in these situations.

What types of interpretation services are available?

- **Onsite Interpretation (OSI):** Available with advance scheduling.
- **Video Remote Interpretation (VRI):** Accessible with advance scheduling through platforms such as Zoom or the provider's preferred video app or platform.
- **Over-the-Phone Interpretation (OPI):** Available 24/7 for most languages.

What if I need an interpreter urgently (same-day or immediate need)?

- For urgent needs: In-person interpreters may not be available on short notice, but we will assist in finding the best available alternative if that is not possible.

Am I allowed to request a family friend or family member to be the assigned interpreter?

- No. To ensure accuracy and confidentiality, family members or friends should not be assigned as interpreters. Please use professional interpretation services provided through the health plan.

What if the patient refuses an interpreter?

- If a patient declines interpretation services, please document the offer and refusal clearly in the medical record. It may be helpful to offer interpretation services again during future visits to support clear communication.

How do I access video interpretation on our devices?

- Turn on the device (iPad, tablet, or laptop), click the provided link, and open the designated app or platform.

How should I address the patient when an interpreter is present?

- Please speak directly to the member, not to the interpreter. Maintain eye contact with the member and communicate naturally (for example, say "How are you feeling today?" instead of "Ask how she feels"). The interpreter's role is to accurately convey everything said by both parties.

What expectations do you have for providers when working with interpreters?

Providers should:

- Speak directly to the patient, not the interpreter.
- Use simple, clear language, and pause to allow interpretation.
- Allow interpreters to interpret fully before continuing. Be mindful of cultural nuances.

Can I ask the interpreter to explain or summarize information?

- No. Interpreters are required to interpret everything that is said accurately and completely, without summarizing or adding personal opinions. If the member needs additional clarification, please restate or explain information directly to them.

Are interpreters bound by confidentiality like other healthcare workers?

- Yes. All interpreters are professionally trained and must adhere to strict confidentiality policies.

Who do I contact if I have questions or issues with interpretation services?

- Please reach out to Interpreter Services at InterpreterRequests@Centene.com; available Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., EST.
- When reporting concerns, please include the appointment date, language, and a brief description of the issue so we can investigate and address it promptly.