

**PROCEDURE FOR THE AUTHORIZATION AND PAYMENT
OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES BY THE
MED-QUEST DIVISION (MQD)**

GENERAL

- Sign language interpreter (SLI) services are only covered by the MQD for Medicaid recipients who are seeking medical care through Medicaid physicians. Payment for sign language interpretation for educational, social, job related services, eligibility for Department of Human Services (DHS) non-medical programs, etc., are not covered by this procedure.
- This procedure does not apply when SLI services are provided in the hospital, the hospital outpatient department or the hospital emergency room because hospitals are responsible for providing SLI services in those situations.

The MQD provides SLI services to the following populations:

- Persons who are Medicaid recipients in the fee-for-service Hawaii Medicaid Program for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) (The procedures DO NOT apply to persons who are enrolled in a Hawaii QUEST medical plan). Medicaid providers should verify Medicaid/QUEST eligibility.
- Persons who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

Interpreter Referral

1. Indirect: Physician's Office Contacts Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) or HSOD

The DCAB of the Department of Health (DOH) is a state agency that maintains a listing of SLIs who are qualified to provide SLI services to Medicaid recipients. DCAB can provide names and phone numbers of SLIs whom you can contact. DCAB does not charge any fee for this list or other assistance in locating qualified SLIs. DCAB's phone number is 586-8121, Voice or 586-8130, TTY. For voice to TTY relay services, dial 711 or (808) 643-8833.

The Medicaid recipient's physician may also contact Hawaii Services on Deafness (HSOD). HSOD is an independent non-profit agency providing SLI referral services. HSOD is not a state agency and will charge a fee if you utilize its services. HSOD's telephone number is (808) 926-4763.

2. Direct: Physician Contacts the SLI

The Medicaid recipient asks his/her medical service provider to contact the patient's preferred SLI.

Notification of Authorization Procedures

1. Indirect: When the physician contacts DCAB or HSOD service:

The DCAB will provide the names of qualified SLIs, including their current level of certification, to the physician. The physician must contact a SLI directly. The physician must complete the DHS 1144 Request for Medical Authorization and submit it to the Fiscal Agent (See Appendix 1 for the address information).

The HSOD will contact a SLI from its list of qualified SLIs.

The HSOD will provide the physician with a copy of the MQD Authorization Procedure shown below and inform the physician that payment authorization must be obtained directly from the MQD.

2.) Direct: When the physician contacts the SLI:

The SLI confirms the appointment, instructs the physician to follow the procedure shown below and provides the physician with a copy of the Form 1144 Request for Medical Authorization Form and instructions or the contact phone number at the MQD. The interpreter informs the physician that payment authorization must be obtained directly from the MQD.

MQD Payment Authorization Procedure

- The physician must complete an 1144 Request for Medical Authorization Form stating the date of the appointment. The 1144 form requires a diagnosis and (brief) reason for the need of a SLI.
- The physician should mail the 1144 form to the Fiscal Agent (Address is listed in Appendix 1). The physician must include his/her telephone number and fax number.
- The physician will receive notification of approved requests.
- The SLI will receive the approved 1144 form from the physician when the patient and the SLI go to the physician's office.
- The individual interpreter will inform the physician that the 1144 form authorization is essential and if not submitted and approved, the SLI will bill the physician.
- If the physician is not aware of this Medicaid procedure for the authorization of SLI services, the SLI may assist the physician with information or have the physician contact the MSB directly at 692-8120.

Payment for SLI Services

- After the completion of the authorized SLI services, the SLI fills in his/her name, address and phone number as the "supplier" of the SLI services on the 1144 form.
- All invoices submitted to MQD must include a completed 1144 form. Payment for services and reimbursement for expenses are based on the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), Title II, Chapter 218 currently in force on the date of service. Original receipts for all expenses (i.e., parking) to be reimbursed must be attached to the invoice.
- Unless there is specific authorization for payment in excess of the Recommended Fee Schedule for Communication Access Providers, payment to SLI will be made in accordance with the most current Recommended Fee Schedule included in 11-HAR-218.
- The 1144 is enclosed with the SLI's invoice and mailed to:

Department of Human Services
Med-QUEST Division
Medical Standard Branch
P.O. Box 700190
Kapolei, HI 96709-0190

- Please allow six weeks for processing of the invoice. To obtain assistance in expediting payments that have not been received in 6 weeks, please call the MSB at 692-8120.

Urgently Needed SLI Services

- The MQD defines "urgently needed SLI services" to mean SLI services requested by a Medicaid recipient's physician when a medically needed visit is required in less than two (2) working days. Generally, these visits are to evaluate new conditions or a complication of an existing problem in which delay in seeing the patient may compromise his/her well being.

- Failure to obtain timely authorization for SLI services needed for visits scheduled more than five (5) working days in advance are not considered urgent by the MQD.

Authorization for Urgently Needed SLI Services

- If the physician believes that his/her request meets the above definition, he/she completes the 1144 form and indicates the date of the visit and checks the box labeled US-Urgent Req for Svcs.
- The physician gives a copy of the Form 1144 to the SLI. The SLI submits this copy with his/her invoice. The MQD consultant will sign it upon receipt of the invoice and attached Form 1144.

EMERGENCY INTERPRETER REFERRAL

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawaii Services on Deafness operates an independent (non-state agency) emergency interpreter referral service in partnership with the Verizon Hawaii Telecommunications Relay Service. This service is not part of the MQD. • If a medical service provider needs emergency SLI services because a person's condition is a medical emergency, the provider can call (711) 643-8255. As emergency medical services are generally provided in hospitals, no specific procedures have been made to address authorization and payment for Emergency Interpreter Services. • However, if services directed at the emergency condition are being provided by a physician in the office setting, the physician should follow the procedures outlined above for Urgently Needed SLI Services. • Hospitals and Physicians using the HSOD emergency referral service should note that the medical service provider has the primary responsibility for payment of interpreters contracted through the service. If approval for payment is not obtained from MQD, the physician is responsible for payment to the interpreter. |
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