

## **Update to our Deaf community Interpretation Services during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The purpose of this message is to update our Deaf community about changes to Interpretation Services at The Ottawa Hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize that these are challenging times for everyone. We want to assure you that we can respond to your needs if - and when - you need health care.

*This document is current as of April 15, 2020. Some information may change as the hospital responds to changing directives from Ontario Public Health.*

### **Scheduled appointments:**

For the safety of all people involved, only urgent appointments and appointments for patients who need a physical assessment are being done in the clinic. All other appointments are done virtually by telephone or video visit.

At this time, our vendors (CHS and SLIAO) prefer to provide sign language interpretation services using video-based interpreting service. If face-to-face interpretation is absolutely necessary, requests will be considered by the vendor on a case-by-case basis. Our vendors are committed to meeting the needs of our patients.

TOH staff are working hard to make sure scheduled appointments with interpretation services are not cancelled. Wherever possible, we will rebook the interpreter using the video-based method.

### **Where to go if you think you need COVID-19 testing:**

If you meet [the criteria for COVID-19 testing](#) there are locations listed on the Ottawa Public Health website. The Ottawa Hospital has these options for interpretation services:

- 1) COVID-19 Assessment Centre (100 Brewer Park) does not have equipment to provide video remote interpretation. If you are comfortable with pen/paper communication, you can come to Brewer Park, or
- 2) The Ottawa Hospital Civic or General campus – Both Emergency Departments have a mobile interpreter unit available.

**Regular services that remain available:**

As always, The Ottawa Hospital has **four VRI mobile interpreter units** available to provide immediate video VRI. TOH's mobile interpreters, are located at:

- The Emergency Department and Birthing Unit at the Civic Campus
- The Emergency Department and Birthing Unit at the General Campus.

Our staff can request a face-to-face interpretation by CHS or SLIAO if absolutely necessary.

**Deaf patients or family admitted to hospital:**

The Ottawa Hospital is under [visitor restrictions](#). Visitors are allowed on a case-by-case basis on compassionate grounds.

Video-based interpretation methods are preferred for these visits. If absolutely necessary, the unit staff will request an interpreter from CHS or SLIAO to come on site. The hospital will provide the visitor and the on-site interpreter with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to limit risk of exposure to all involved.

**Which video-based interpretation methods are we using?**

- SLIAO uses Zoom
- CHS uses OTN..

**eVisits:**

Patients at TOH can access their medical information through MyChart. We are working at adding ZOOM to it for eVisits. If you have an eVisit scheduled in MyChart, the clinic will send you instructions on how to connect at the time of your appointment.

Our Ambulatory Care services are trying out eVisits using MyChart and Zoom. We are in the process of including the 3<sup>rd</sup> participant (e.g. ASL/LSQ interpreter). We will notify you when this is available.

If you do not have a MyChart account yet, please contact [mychart@toh.ca](mailto:mychart@toh.ca) to get an account activation code. [Read MyChart FAQs](#).

**Questions or concerns?**

Please contact Patient Relations at [prelations@toh.ca](mailto:prelations@toh.ca) or Interpretation Services at [Interpretationservices@toh.ca](mailto:Interpretationservices@toh.ca),