

## **1.14 Health Literacy Significance for Special Populations: Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

People in the U.S. with hearing loss and deafness have faced significant challenges in getting their communication needs met in health care. The [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) dictates that communication needs of patients who are deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) are to be met in health care.

- This means that health care service providers are to provide American Sign Language interpretation in a timely manner to patients who request it, either through an in-person interpreter or video remote interpretation, at no cost to the patient.
- Hospitals can often provide devices to amplify communication for patients who are hard of hearing.
- When interpretation is not being provided in a timely manner, deaf patients can be misdiagnosed or medically treated for the wrong issue, and the lack of communication with care providers can cause avoidable escalation of isolation and anxiety for the patient.

### **Possible Topics for Health Literacy Education**

(for learners who are deaf/HOH or have family members who are deaf/HOH)

- Community resources for helping persons who are deaf/HOH access health care and advocate for their health care needs
- How to locate local deaf-sensitive physical and mental health care providers
- How to request an interpreter at local health care facilities
- How to lodge a complaint if interpreting is not provided as required by law



## Resources

### [Deaf MD](#)

Locate deaf-sensitive local health care providers and find video health information in American Sign Language.

### [Health Bridges: Health Information for Persons who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing](#)

This site provides helpful insight into communication needs and rights pertaining to health care for people who are deaf or HOH.

### [Health Care Interactions with Deaf Culture](#)

This article by Helen E. Meador and Philip Zazove appeared in the *Journal of American Board of Family Practitioners* (2005), vol. 18, no. 3, pgs. 218-222.

### [Deaf Culture and Sign Language](#)

These resources are provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

### [National Association of the Deaf: Health Care and Mental Health Services](#)

### [Teaching English to Deaf Students](#)

This page is a forum discussion from Dave's ESL Café.

### [Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)

This site includes a list of sign language interpreter services in Virginia.

