

#### Amplified telephone:

Many people with hearing loss simply need extra amplification on their phone to be able to use it easily. Others need the phone to be compatible with the telecoil in their hearing aid or cochlear implant (all landline phones sold in the US since 1989 are required to be hearing aid compatible - see [www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common\\_Carrier/FAQ/faq\\_hac.html](http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/FAQ/faq_hac.html) )

#### Captioned Telephone:

Captioned telephone includes speech recognition software to convert the relay operator's voice into text. People who speak for themselves but have difficulty understanding on a telephone can read the conversations on their PCs or telephone displays with minimal delay. CapTel and Caption Call are examples of captioned telephone equipment. Sprint Relay and Hamilton Relay offer internet captioning service to use with any phone and an internet connection.

#### Video Relay

Video relay enables sign language users to communicate on the telephone through a sign language interpreter. The user and interpreter interact via PCs and webcams or videophones allowing conversation with people who do not sign. Video relay services is offered by companies such as Z, Sorensen, Sprint, Hamilton, CSDVRS, Purple, etc.

#### Text Relay

Text relay, such as TTY, enables deaf people with keyboards and screens to communicate via an operator who speaks or types the conversations as required. In its current format, the relay process can be slow and can inhibit conversations, yet is still a valuable service.

#### Point-to-Point Messaging

A laptop with internet access, using a webcam, or using an instant messaging system are examples of point-to-point messaging systems. Many people who are Deaf or have lost hearing use mobile devices, chosen to meet their specific needs. Often all they need is WiFi access so their own devices will work.

#### Resources:

The Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Sanderson Community Center and Southern Utah Program) is a state agency under the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. If you would like further information about obtaining an interpreter, CART provider, borrow an assistive listening system, or view our accessible telephones and devices please contact:

Sanderson Community Center of the  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
801-263-4860 (Front Desk)  
801-263-4886 (Administration)  
[www.deafservices.utah.gov](http://www.deafservices.utah.gov)  
[jrhill@utah.gov](mailto:jrhill@utah.gov)  
[emccormick@utah.gov](mailto:emccormick@utah.gov)

Marilyn T. Call, Director  
Div. of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
[mcall@utah.gov](mailto:mcall@utah.gov)



Donald R. Uchida, Executive Director  
Utah State Office of Rehabilitation  
P.O. Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

## A GUIDE FOR HOSPITALS: ASSISTING PATIENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE HEARING LOSS



Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

### DIVISION OF SERVICES TO THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

#### Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

5709 South 1500 West  
Taylorsville, Utah 84123-5217  
801-263-4860 (vp/v)  
801-263-4862 (tty)  
801-263-4879 (hard of hearing)  
801-263-4865 (fax)

#### Southern Utah Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

1067 E. Tabernacle, Suite 10  
St. George, Utah 84770-3163  
435-673-8974 (vp/v/tty)  
435-673-8983 (fax)

## The Need:

People who have hearing loss need assistance to understand what is being said when they are in a hospital.

Statistics estimate that 10% of the population has some degree of hearing loss, which would be 255,000 people in Utah. However, the incidence of hearing loss increases with age to the extent that one out of three people over age 65 is hard of hearing. These are people that may struggle in a hospital setting because of the difficulty of trying to understand what is said without accommodations.

People with hearing loss use various methods to improve their access to communication. Most individuals who are **Hard of Hearing** greatly benefit from the use of **assistive listening devices**. Hearing aids amplify everything, the sounds the listener wants to hear as well as the background noise he or she does not want to hear. Assistive listening devices use a microphone placed directly in front of the speaker with a transmitter to send the sound to those with corresponding receivers. This reduces the background noise while amplifying the speaker's voice.

Some people, however, do not benefit from hearing aids or assistive listening devices. They have **little usable hearing** and need **Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART)** captioning. CART is provided by a court reporter using a steno machine and laptop computer. Other individuals who are **Deaf** prefer **interpreters**. (Utah law requires businesses to use certified interpreters.) There are three different kinds of interpreters:

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Oral (lipreading)
- Cued Speech

To know which type of accommodation is needed, ask the individual(s) with hearing loss.

## The Requirement:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers **communication accessibility** in places of public accommodation, including hospitals. The public accommodation provisions of the ADA require businesses "to make reasonable attempts to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy the same level of service provided to individuals without disabilities."

The ADA requires auxiliary aids and services must be provided unless such actions would result in an undue burden, defined as a significant difficulty or expense. Costs of the accommodation can be passed on to consumers across the board, but not specifically passed on to the individuals who use them. A tax credit exists to help with the expenses of accommodating communication access. For more information from the ADA please visit: <http://www.ada.gov/hospcombr.htm>

## The Solutions:

Accommodations may be needed when Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals are hospitalized. Some individuals who are Deaf may not have a good understanding of written documents and will need an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. Individuals who are Hard of Hearing may just need you to be conscious of their hearing loss by speaking clearly in a quiet place. You may also offer assistive listening devices and write down important details during the planning process.

Routinely ask families if they are aware of family members with special communication needs. Family members may be experiencing shock and lack the ability to think clearly enough to advocate for themselves at this time.

If hearing aids or cochlear implants are normally worn, a patient needs to be encouraged to wear them in the hospital as much as possible to help with their communication needs. There also needs to be a safe place to store them when not in use to avoid loss.

The most common communication accommodations are assistive listening systems, interpreter services, and real-time captioning.

Assistive listening systems: This technology uses a transmitter plugged into a sound system or connected to its own microphone, which is placed in close proximity to the speaker. The signal is transmitted to a receiver, which the listener can adjust to the volume needed for his or her individual hearing sensitivity – much like a radio receiving transmission from a station.

CART: Communication Access Real-Time Translation is provided by court reporters who turn the spoken word into written text. It can be provided for one or two people using a laptop monitor, or for many people by connecting additional monitors (or TV screens) or by projecting the words onto a screen positioned beside the speaker.

Interpreters: Deaf individuals who are skilled in American Sign Language (ASL), the natural language of Deaf individuals, need ASL interpreters. American Sign Language has its own grammar and syntax; it does not follow English word order. Native ASL users may lack the English skills necessary to benefit from CART written notes.

Oral interpreters mouth a speaker's words silently for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. This method of interpreting assists with speech reading for people who were taught oral communication instead of sign language. Cued Speech interpreters supplement lip-reading with a system of phonetic visual cues.

## Options for telephone services:

Having access to family through the telephone is important to anyone involved in a hospital setting. Most people with hearing loss use an amplified or captioned telephone. Some prefer email or cell phone text communication or video relay service.