

# EMORY

## HEALTHCARE

With six hospitals, 200 provider locations, and 1,800 physicians in more than 70 specialties, the Emory Healthcare Network is the largest and most comprehensive health system in Georgia. As the only health network in the state that brings together a full range of hospitals, clinics, and local practices, Emory Healthcare is committed to providing patients and families with better, more collaborative care for all of their medical needs.

Emory is distinguished nationwide for its quality and is the only health system in Georgia to have hospitals ranked among the top 10 academic health systems in America for quality and accountability. Additionally, U.S. News & World Report has ranked Emory University Hospital the number one hospital in both Georgia and metro Atlanta for the last four years in a row.

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### Emory's Limited-English Community

The Emory Healthcare Network operates six hospitals and over 200 clinics throughout the state of Georgia. Out of the 9.14 million people living in Georgia, 1.21 million or 13.3 % speak a language other than English at home.

**Emory's Most Popular Languages:** The hospital receives requests for Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, American Sign Language, Mandarin, Cantonese, and many other languages. The hospital also serves Burmese, Somalian, and Nepali refugee populations living in the region.

### Emory's Mission for All Patients

Emory Healthcare is committed to providing the best care for its patients and serving its community, which includes limited-English speakers.

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"We care about their experience," explained Michelle Haddock, Coordinator of Emory Medical Interpretation and Translation Services. "Every time we use an interpreter – anytime we can avoid misunderstanding with our limited-English patients – that is a success story for us."

### Transforming Emory's Language Services Program into a Program of Excellence

Michelle Haddock, Coordinator of Emory Medical Interpretation and Translation Services, manages the language services program for five of the hospitals in the system. Krista Stepney, Program Manager, oversees language access for Emory Clinic and Emory Specialty Associates.

Emory promoted Michelle Haddock to her current position in 2011, and at that time, the health network was experiencing difficulty with its telephonic interpretation vendor. To start with, Emory's phone interpretation billing charges were higher than usage numbers, and the vendor could or would not fix the underlying issue. Furthermore, the interpretation quality was inconsistent from one call to the next, making staff reluctant to dial a remote interpreter. This led to poor staff recollection about how to reach a phone interpreter because they were using it so little.

A member of Emory's staff interpretation team suggested using the same phone interpretation provider as a neighboring hospital, a vendor apparently well-liked at the facility. Haddock reached out to that vendor, CyraCom, who was willing and able to help her improve her language services program.

Haddock and CyraCom discovered that switching to CyraCom would result in cost savings and increased accessibility over their current vendor. Eventually, after submitting the findings to Emory's Chief Operations Officer and each hospital's leadership, Haddock received approval to switch to CyraCom.

## Implementing Phone Interpretation at Emory Hospitals

CyraCom's Implementation team worked with each of Emory's hospitals to assess their needs.

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"The whole team made it easy. They were very patient; they answered all questions and demonstrated everything," said Haddock. "They even conducted in-services for the overnight staff so I didn't have to."

During implementation, reporting and billing were streamlined, and calling interpreters became easier for staff. Each hospital and/or clinic site, when calling CyraCom, automatically had their account and location details logged to an integrated usage and billing system. The automation also meant Emory staff did not waste time remembering, retrieving, or entering an account number every time they needed to dial an interpreter. Emory began utilizing both corded CyraCom Blue Phones and CyraCom cordless phones, depending on the preference of each department. For example, Emory placed cordless instead of corded phones in the ICU, which each department keeps at the nurses' stations. In other units, each room had a corded Blue Phone installed for easy use.

## Implementing Phone Interpretation at Emory Clinic & Emory Specialty Associates

"In September 2013, once the hospitals had CyraCom installed, we began to implement CyraCom phone interpretation across our

physician group practices," explained Stepney. "The COO of Emory Clinics decided to implement it as way to cut down on costs, but not impede on the overall patient experience. Before phone interpretation, we would have on-site interpreters waiting for extended periods of time before they could even start interpreting, especially if the clinicians ran behind in their schedules."

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As in the hospitals, each clinic set up auto-authentication so medical secretaries could hit speed dial and connect to the service without entering additional information. CyraCom also installed cordless phones, enabling providers to use them throughout the clinic, such as in the waiting areas, physicians' offices, registration, or check-out areas. In addition to the implementation, Krista Stepney and the CyraCom team conducted in-services for over 55 Emory sites across the state of Georgia.

"While there was initially some pushback, as there is with any major change," said Stepney, "we discovered that if we were completely transparent with the physicians and other staff about the reality of legal requirements, cost savings, and other fees, they would become not only more flexible switching from on-site to remote, but they would actively look for ways to help us out and be more compliant. We also found that by conducting an in-service that explained how easy it was to access an interpreter, we saw more buy-in and acceptance of the new vendor."

## Implementing Video Interpretation at Emory

Emory chose to equip each hospital with a video interpretation cart, outfitted with MacBooks and high-quality video equipment.

During in-services, the CyraCom Implementation team helped establish "super users" – people with extra training at each location that could take ownership and act as champions of the video interpretation service.

CyraCom recommended that the carts be stored in locations such as the nurses' station for easy accessibility by staff. In addition to a laptop cart, Emory University Hospital Midtown has a video interpretation iPad stand in the emergency room.

Emory also has a video interpretation cart available at its Eye Center Clinics where there is a high concentration of Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients.

"Our physicians were very excited when we first brought video interpretation to the Emory Eye Center," said Stepney. "We've found that if we just explain the costs savings and keep them informed, that they understand the need to have remote interpretation instead of live interpretation for certain situations."

## On-Site Interpretation

When Haddock first came on board, Emory only had three on-site interpreters, one for Korean and Spanish, one for Mandarin and Cantonese, and one for Vietnamese. Since then, they have grown their on-site interpreters to seven: two Korean, one Vietnamese, and five Spanish interpreters. Emory staff follow a standardized protocol to request interpreters, whether for the internally-supported languages or those requiring a vendor.

"We have determined to use on-site interpreters for situations such as same-day surgeries, long hospice or end-of-life meetings, and meetings with social workers," said Haddock. "We also use on-site interpreters for transplants, which require traveling between multiple clinics and 8-hour evaluations. The rest of the time, if the nurses want to explain something simply and quickly, such as delivering a dose of medicine, they will call CyraCom. They find it to be much more convenient than calling for staff interpreters."

## Document Translation

"One of our Spanish-speaking staff interpreters is in charge of translation at Emory because he is ATA-certified," said Haddock. "He does some translation for shorter documents in Spanish. Otherwise, Emory outsources translation needs. I am also working with the Patient Education Council to have documents across the system eventually standardized and translated into other languages."

## Testing and Training

Emory on-site interpreters are required to have a 40-hour, medical interpreter certificate and receive 85% or higher on an oral test to confirm proficiency. If they don't have oral tests available to take for their language, Emory may use CyraCom's assessment test. Additionally, each interpreter has to have at least one year of medical interpreting experience and five references.

## Training Staff at Emory

Every six months at existing locations and every time a new location opens, Krista Stepney or Michelle Haddock travels to meet with staff, connect with leadership, and discuss interpretation services options.

"We found that it's been most successful if we continue to educate the staff regularly, even if they have heard the information before," said Haddock. "Even simple reminders make a big difference in staff adoption, like discussing how to place interpretation calls or letting them know staff interpreters are available."

To improve staff adoption, Michelle Haddock created a diversity education program that teaches staff about diversity issues, such as the rights of limited-English-proficient patients in the US, the Americans with Disability Act, and Title VI. When Haddock presented her course to the leadership at Emory University Hospital Midtown, the leaders decided to require 100% of the staff at Emory Midtown to take this class. As of 2016, Emory leadership implemented this program to be part of the staff yearly regulatory online modules to be completed across the Emory Healthcare Network.

Stepney and Haddock are currently working together to bolster cultural competency education across the system in response to increasingly high volumes of LEP patients. They believe increased language access compliance contributes to Emory's goal of putting patients' needs first. As a result, they are considering new avenues for education so that staff are reminded more often than the six-month in-services. This includes information in the Emory Network newsletter and distributing flyers at medical resident and new physician orientations.

## Benefits of Providing Language Services

"One morning we had a patient come in that was about to deliver a baby," said Haddock. "The patient spoke an African language we rarely encounter, so I called CyraCom to see if they had that language. The medical staff needed to induce her, but they couldn't until they had an interpreter. The patient needed to understand what the procedure would be in order to give consent. When the interpreter came on the line, the patient so was happy to have an interpreter who could speak the same language and help her understand what was happening with her and her baby. With CyraCom's help, the medical team delivered the baby while communicating with the mother to keep her calm."

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## About CyraCom

In business for 25 years, CyraCom is a language services leader that provides interpretation and translation services to thousands of organizations across the US and worldwide.

Providing the best language services is a complex formula, and CyraCom considers every piece of the equation: quality, availability, security, speed and accessibility, and client support.

## Contact CyraCom

Contact CyraCom today to discuss how we can improve your language services program.

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