



Video Interpretation in Language Services
A Case Study with Mercy Medical Center



Dignity Health™
Mercy Medical Center



Client Profile: Mercy Medical Center

Mercy Medical Center, part of the Dignity Health system, is a 186-bed, acute care hospital that provides healthcare to the greater Merced Community in California. Its main facility specializes in Cardiac, Critical Care, Maternity, Radiology, Surgery, and Stroke.

In addition to the main hospital, Mercy Medical Center also has three rural health clinics:

- Family Care: Services general family medical needs. Staffed by residents enrolled in a program with Mercy and UC Davis School of Medicine.
- Kids Care: Services new mothers and their children. Staffed by physicians.
- General Medicine Clinic: Services special needs of the community. Staffed by highly specialized physicians. Community members can see specialists here that they would otherwise not be able to see.

Community Profile

Located in the heart of Northern California, Mercy Medical Center serves a very diverse patient base. According to the US Census, 55.7% of Merced County is of Hispanic or Latino origin, 25% are foreign born, and 51.8% of the population speaks a language other than English at home. The main languages serviced by the hospital are Spanish, Hmong, Punjabi, Arabic, and Lao.

Language Services Program

Because Mercy Medical Center executives believe that proper communication is the first step to providing care, they have a policy to always use qualified, medical interpreters. The language services program is run by Mika Grisham, Director of Risk Services and Patient Safety Officer, and Daniel Andersen, the Director of Information Technology.

Phone Interpretation

The main hospital and all rural health clinics use CyraCom for their phone interpretation needs.

Video Interpretation

Mercy Medical Center is pioneering the use of technology and language services with its use of CyraCom's video interpretation.

On-Site Interpretation

For on-site interpretation, Mercy Medical Center contracts with a local provider to supply trained, medical interpreters. The hospital has Spanish interpreters on site for 18 hours per day, and Hmong interpreters on site for 12 hours per day.

Document Translation

Mercy Medical Center also uses document translation for medical documents like consent forms, signs, posters, brochures, and information packets. The hospital recently completed a Spanish translation of a 24-page document on proper baby care for new mothers.

Video Remote Interpretation (VRI)

Mercy Medical Center services a large population, including many Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing patients. According to Grisham, quick access to American Sign Language interpreters is a must. "We had tried other ASL services in the past, but there were always large wait times. This created a big problem, as it stopped us from communicating well with our patients." After switching to CyraCom, this situation changed. "Having VRI service with CyraCom makes interpreters immediately available. It's wonderful."



CyraCom VRI Carts

"The CyraCom VRI carts are a great thing to have for this service," says Daniel Andresen, who is responsible for language services equipment. "It comes with a laptop, webcam, rolling cart, and speakers. There are two carts in our main hospital, with six additional carts ordered for other areas."



According to Andresen, "Once we received the carts, they were very easy to set up. It was already configured for us with the VRI shortcut on the desktop. All we had to do was set up our username and password," says Andresen. "The laptops connected to our wireless network in the hospital without any problems at all."

Service Access

Getting connected to the VRI service is very straightforward. "Once you click on the VRI icon, select your language and connect," says Andresen. "For users who prefer following a set of instructions, each VRI cart in Mercy Medical Center has directions attached to it. It's very user-friendly to everyone." Mercy Medical Center also created a sign-out sheet for nurses to use when they need the VRI Cart. This way, Mercy can track what departments are using VRI to see where the greatest needs are.

Staff Training for VRI

"Since both our nurses and physicians use the VRI service, we wanted to make sure that staff were fully trained," says Grisham. "We had a short rollout with housing supervisors and nursing management. We also have training opportunities on the VRI carts at our nursing quarterly meetings." According to Grisham, training really helps promote usage. "Once staff members see how easy it is to access the service and how quick they get connected to an interpreter, all doubt is removed."

Successful Use

After implementing the CyraCom VRI service, Mercy Medical Center was able to service Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing patients quickly and effectively. "The reliability of this system has made an impact in patients having immediate trust in the care they receive from us," says Grisham. "They can clearly see how highly we value good communication with patients."

For one deaf family in particular, the VRI service could not have come at a better time. As Robert McLaughlin, Director of Marketing, recalls, "Literally, the day we got the cart, no sooner had we finished setting everything up that a deaf family came into the hospital," says Robert. "Their son needed surgery and they needed to communicate with the doctor immediately. Since we just got it set up that day, we weren't totally ready to roll it out yet, but we wheeled the cart up there and turned it on. Within seconds we were connected to an ASL interpreter over video and the family was able to communicate with the doctor. They were literally in tears; it was that monumental for them! It seemed like a huge weight was lifted from their shoulders. The service worked very well and everyone was very happy."

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Additional CyraCom Services

Blue Phones

Mercy Medical Center has CyraCom Blue Phones in every patient room, registration desk, ancillary area, and rural health clinic. "Having phones accessible everywhere means that no one has to track them down to use them," says Grisham. "This is a patient and staff satisfier, and we have been praised by the community for taking this extra step."

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Outbound Calling

Once a patient is discharged, hospital staff can use the CyraCom service to do patient callbacks, asking critical questions about pain, medication, and follow up procedures.

Staff Training

Grisham personally trains medical staff at meetings to show them how the CyraCom service works. "Once they see how easy it is, they change their attitude to 'why NOT use it!'"

Account Management

"My Account Manager at CyraCom has always been very helpful. Any time I have a question, she is very prompt and gets me what I need quickly," says Grisham. "Everyone at CyraCom has been very attentive to our needs."

Implementation

Mercy Medical Center moved to a new facility in May 2010. According to Grisham, "CyraCom was a very big help. They accommodated my order and had all the Blue Phones shipped and

pre-programmed. They sent out two representatives to help install the phones according to how I had mapped it out. At the end, we did a final sweep through to make sure we didn't miss anything. We were able to accomplish install before any patients were accepted."

Support Materials

Each facility is using CyraCom support materials, such as language posters in main entry areas and language charts by all of the phones.

Above and Beyond

Patient Language Preference Notation

The patient's preferred language is documented at time of admission in their Electronic Health Records. If the patient is admitted to patient care unit or undergoing an outpatient procedure, language preference is reconfirmed through that admitting session as well. This way, it's documented on their chart and the nurses or physicians always have that information.

Joint Commission Reviews

Mercy Medical Center had a complete Joint Commission review when it moved into its new facility, and has had a few annual reviews since then. "Language services is definitely looked at in the reviews," says Grisham. "We can proudly show them the official documents we have for our interpreter services policy. We take the surveyors on rounds and show them all of the Blue Phones, VRI carts, posters, and other support materials we have. Once they see all of this, they are very satisfied."

Needless to say, Mercy Medical Center passed with flying colors. "Many of the surveyors have been impressed with the fact that we have Blue Phones in each room. That's a real high point for us," says Grisham.

Mika Grisham is the Director of Risk Services, Patient Safety Officer, and the Facility Compliance Liaison. She oversees patient safety concerns, legal matters, and compliance and risk management programs.

Daniel Andresen is the Director of Information Technology, responsible for all technology systems in Mercy Medical Center, including language services equipment.

Robert McLaughlin is the Marketing Director for Mercy Medical Center in Merced. He oversees the Marketing communication for the hospital and all of its associated clinics and service lines.

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. Visit www.cyracom.com to learn more.

Contact CyraCom

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

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