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EASTERN OREGON
COORDINATED CARE
ORGANIZATION

EOCCO Health Care Interpreter Services Billing Guide

Table of contents

About this guide.....	3
Health Care Interpreter Laws.....	4
Federal Laws.....	4
Oregon Laws	4
Steps to Oregon HCI Certification and Qualification	5
Spoken Language	5
Sign Language	7
Billing for HCI Services.....	8
Billing	8
Coverage Criteria.....	8
Documentation Requirements	9
Use of EOCCO Language Service Provider Vendors	9

About this guide

Every person has the right to communicate with their health care provider in the language they feel most comfortable using. The Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) recognizes and supports the critical role that health care interpreters have in ensuring that people who prefer a language other than English and people who are Deaf or hard of hearing are receiving high-quality, culturally responsive, care.

In Oregon, health care interpreters (HCIs) are certified or qualified at the state level and identified in a central [Health Care Interpreter registry](#). The certification and qualification of interpreters ensures a trained, quality, and locally available HCI workforce in compliance with state and federal laws.

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the laws and policies that govern HCI training, credentialing, and delivery of sign and spoken language services to Medicaid/OHP members. Additionally, this guide details the documentation and coding required to bill for interpreter services provided by Oregon certified or qualified HCIs.

For questions about the guide or further individual support, please contact EOCCOmetrics@modahealth.com.

Health Care Interpreter Laws

Federal Laws

Civil Rights Act (1964): Title VI

Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance or funding. [Revised guidance](#) to Title VI published by the US Department of Health and Human Services in 2000 outlines that recipients of federal financial assistance/funding are required to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to programs or activities for persons who speak a language other than English (LOE).

Americans with Disability Act (ADA, 1990)

[Revised guidelines](#) to the American with Disability Act (2010) outline that covered entities [state and local governments, public accommodations, and commercial facilities] must ensure that people who experience blindness, vision impairments, or who are deaf or hard of hearing are receiving quality and effective communication through their preferred communication mode or method.

Affordable Care Act (2010): Section 1557

Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability for any health program or activity that receives federal funding through the Department of Health and Human Services (including Medicare and Medicaid). This includes ensuring that individuals who speak a language other than English who are served by, or who are likely to encounter, a health entity have meaningful and equal access to their programs or activities (including high quality oral and written language assistance, translation of materials, etc.)

Oregon Laws

House Bill 2359 (2022)

Oregon House Bill (HB) 2539 requires healthcare providers who receive public funding, CCOs, and interpretation service companies, to make a good-faith effort to work with Oregon Health Authority (OHA) certified or qualified health care interpreters from the Health Care Interpreter (HCI) Registry when providing interpretation services. HB 2359 also provides OHA authority to train and certify HCIs and maintain the central state HCI registry.

ORS 413.550

Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 413.550 requires the State of Oregon to establish a program to certify health care interpreters who serve patients who speak a language other than English in healthcare settings. The intent is to ensure that people who speak a language other than English are receiving quality health care and complete information in their preferred language.

- [OAR 950-050](#) is the set of administrative rules that outline the standards for the implementation of ORS 413.550. This includes rules that:
 - Establish the state central HCI registry
 - Establish a process for the certification and qualification of sign and spoken language HCIs
 - Set standards for health care providers and CCOs working with HCIs and interpreter service companies in Oregon

Steps to Oregon HCI Certification and Qualification

Spoken Language

To obtain an Oregon HCI Certification or Qualification¹ for a spoken language, an interpreter must meet all the requirements listed below:

Qualification	Certification
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Age: 18 years of age or older [supply a copy of a valid government-issued ID]➤ Education: High school diploma (GED Equivalent) or higher➤ Must not be in the Medicaid exclusion database➤ Training: 60 hours of formal health care interpreter training [completion of an OHA-approved HCI training program]➤ Language Proficiency*: Must demonstrate proficiency in English and the target language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ All the requirements listed in “Qualification”➤ Certification Test: Proof of passing a certification test from one of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters• Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters• National Center for State Courts Court Interpreter Oral Examination• Oregon Court Interpreter Certification• Federal Court Interpreter Certification Exam

¹ OHA Spoken Language Certified and Qualified HCI Information is sourced from [OHA's Oregon Health Care Interpreter Program Requirements for Spoken Languages Guide](#) (last updated 12/2023).

****Language Proficiency Requirements**

Target Language: Proficiency in the non-English target spoken language can be demonstrated by passing any of the exams listed below:

- 1) [Language Line University](#)- with a passing score of Level 3+ or above (Interagency Language Roundtable [ILR] equivalent)
- 2) [Language Testing International](#)- ACTFL assessment with a score of advanced mid-level or above [both the optional phone interpreter {OPI-telephonic} and computer recording {OPIc} tests are acceptable]

For a target spoken language of lesser diffusion² that does not have a standardized language proficiency test option, HCIs can apply for OHA certified or qualified HCI status with no formal language proficiency test. Please see OHA's [Application for Interpreters from Language of Lesser Diffusion](#) document for more information.

English Language: English language proficiency can be demonstrated through any of following ways:

- 1) Passing an approved Oral proficiency exam
 - a. Approved oral proficiency exams include: *Language Line University, Language Testing International, National Center for State Courts Court Interpreter Examination*
- 2) Having a Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate or any other degree from a US institution of higher education
- 3) Graduation from any high school, or completion of a GED, in an English-speaking country where English is the primary language
- 4) Graduation from a higher education institution abroad where English is the primary language of instruction
- 5) Completing a proficiency test with a passing test result no more than four years old
 - a. See OHA's [Oregon Health Care Interpreter Requirements for Spoken Language guide](#) for a complete list of qualifying proficiency tests

Ready to apply to be an OHA Certified or Qualified Spoken Language HCI?

Utilize these OHA provided checklists to ensure all the required documentation is gathered and testing requirements completed:

OHA Certified HCI: [Checklist Link](#)

OHA Qualified HCI: [Check List Link](#)

² A "language of lesser diffusion" is a language that is spoken by a small number of people in a certain geographic area.

Sign Language

To obtain Oregon HCI Certification or Qualification for sign language³, an interpreter must meet all the requirements listed below:

Qualification	Certification
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Age: 18 years of age or older [supply a copy of a valid government-issued ID]➤ Education: High school diploma (GED Equivalent) or higher➤ Must not be in the Medicaid exclusion database➤ Current RID Certification [National Interpreter Certification (NIC) or Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)]<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://rid.org/➤ Sign Language Proficiency*: Must demonstrate proficiency in Sign Language by passing an OHA-approved sign language proficiency exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ All the requirements listed in “Qualification”➤ Training: 60 hours of formal health care interpreter training [completion of an OHA-approved HCI training program]

*Sign Language Proficiency

Proficiency in sign language can be demonstrated by passing any of the exams listed below within the past 4 years:

- 1) [American Sign Language Proficiency Interview \(ASLPI\)](#)- with a minimum proficiency level of 4
- 2) [Sign Language Proficiency Interview \(SLPI: ASL\)](#)- with a minimum proficiency level of advanced
 - a. This exam is available from the following organizations:
 - i. [Bridges Oregon](#)
 - ii. [North Carolina American Sign Language Teachers Associated](#)

To submit an OHA Certified or Qualified Spoken or Sign Language HCI Application, use OHA’s [Health Workforce Registry Applicant Portal](#).

Link: <https://healthworkforceregistry.oregon.gov/>

This portal will require creation of a unique applicant log-in, and will allow applicant to view application status, application history, and any current THW or HCI certifications.

³ OHA Sign Language Certified and Qualified HCI information is sourced from [Oregon Health Care Interpreter Program Requirements for Sigh Language Interpreters](#) document (last updated 2/2024)

Billing for HCI Services

Billing

DMAP [Oregon Medicaid] enrolled providers can bill for sign or spoken language interpreter services as an add-on fee per date of service to a covered health care visit using the T1013 HCPCS code.

Code	Units	Fee	Description
T1013	1	\$67.35	Sign or spoken language interpreter services, per 15 minutes

T1013 is a timed code, which means EOCCO will reimburse for multiple units⁴.

1 unit of T1013= 15 minutes of sign or spoken language interpreter service provided

For up-to-date reimbursement rates, reference the [OHP Fee Schedule](#). EOCCO reimburses at the same rate as OHA's fee-for-service rate for the T1013 code using the fee-for-service model.

Coverage Criteria

EOCCO will cover the T1013 code fee if the following criteria are met:

- 1) The rendering service provider is DMAP enrolled
 - a. To check DMAP provider enrollment, use the [MMIS NPI Verification](#) tool
- 2) The code is billed with a covered OHP service [*above the line* on the Medicaid [Prioritized List of Covered Services](#)]
- 3) The code is not billed with bundled-rate services that incorporate administrative costs (e.g. inpatient hospital stays, home health or hospice visits, or services provided by long-term care facilities)
- 4) The language assistance service is provided by an **OHA certified or qualified HCI**
 - a. The OHA certified or qualified HCI can either be a **clinic staff member or a clinic contracted/hired HCI**
 - b. Verify that the HCI is an active OHA certified or qualified HCI using [OHA's Health Care Interpreter Registry](#)

⁴ For timed codes, billed units follow the **mid-point rule** which allows for rounding up to the next unit if the amount of time rendered for the service falls above the mid-point between timed units. For instance, if 23 minutes of interpreter services were rendered 2 units of the T1013 code could be billed.

Documentation Requirements

Keep documentation in the patient's medical record/chart note that indicates use of an OHA certified or qualified health care interpreter. This documentation is required for language access reporting to EOCCO and for any potential audit of services billed.

Documentation included in the chart note should include at a minimum:

- Interpreter First and Last Name
- How the interpreter joined the appointment [in-person, telephone or video]
- If the interpreter is a bilingual clinic staff member or a contracted/hired HCI
- Interpreter OHA Certified or Qualified status
 - Indicate 'OHA certified' or 'OHA qualified' and include the interpreter's OHA HCI Registry Number [a 5- or 6-digit numeric code starting with a '0' or '1']
 - OHA's [Health Care Interpreter Registry](#) can be used to identify an interpreter's unique OHA HCI Registry Number

Use of EOCCO Language Service Provider Vendors

EOCCO contracts with two language service vendors, **Passport to Languages** and **Certified Languages International**, to provide scheduled and on-demand telephonic and video health care interpreter services for EOCCO members free of charge.

Any clinic that serves EOCCO members can utilize Passport to Languages and/or Certified Languages International language assistance services for EOCCO member appointments. For more information on how to utilize these EOCCO language service vendors, please visit the [EOCCO provider website](#) or email EOCCOmetrics@modahealth.com.

EOCCO will be billed/invoiced directly by Passport to Languages and Certified Languages International for use of their interpreter services for EOCCO member appointments. Language assistance services provided to EOCCO members by a Passport to Languages or Certified Languages International interpreters **cannot be added on to a visit claim or billed for using the T1013 code**.

For language access reporting and compliance: Please keep documentation in the medical record/chart note that indicates use of a Passport to Language or Certified Languages International interpreter. Document identifying HCI information, including:

- Language Service Provider vendor used
- Interpreter First and Last Name
- How the interpreter joined the appointment [telephone or video]
- Interpreter OHA Certified or Qualified status

- If the Interpreter is OHA Qualified or Certified, include their OHA HCI Registry Number [a 5 or 6 digit numeric code starting with a '0' or '1']
 - OHA's [Health Care Interpreter Registry](#) can be used to identify an interpreter's OHA HCI Registry Number



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