



WESTCARE GULF COAST-FLORIDA, INC.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PLAN

PLAN AND PURPOSE:

WestCare shall comply with the deaf and hard-of-hearing requirements pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the American with Disabilities Act [ADA] and CFOP 60-10, Ch. 4, "Auxiliary Aids and Services for the Deaf of Hard-of-hearing. The purpose of this Plan is to establish guidelines for ensuring the provision of services to the deaf and hard-of-hearing clients.

TRAINING: Employees of WestCare are initially trained on the requirements for the deaf and hard-of-hearing during the initial orientation, but no later than 60 days from the commencement of employment. Refresher training on how to provide assistance to persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, persons with disabilities, and those who are limited English Proficient is conducted on an annual basis for all employees. Staff who provide HIV Intervention Services shall complete the Department of Health Training

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Interpretative services, e-mail, automated attendants, pagers, cellular phones, newsletters and the internet are some of the communication devices that are continuously reevaluated for increased and improved access.

HEARING IMPAIRED AND/OR CHALLENGED PERSONS

Persons that are hearing impaired and/or challenged will be served within all programs and services of WestCare to the extent it is safely possible in the individual WestCare facilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made to assist the person served to participate to the level possible. The respective Program Director and/or Program Coordinator will review with the person served and together determine the clinical and physical aspects of the service that may prove problematic for participation. An individualized plan, whether for assessment, treatment or service, will be developed that will meet the persons needs in the respective modality of treatment.

Sign Language/Oral Interpreter: The Program Director will formally notify the person served of their right to have a qualified sign language and/or oral interpreter provided while participating in program activities. Sign and oral interpreters that are certified and licensed can be arranged through The Deaf Services Center. Information is available with each program and clinical director.

A hearing impaired person will be assisted and mentored in the respective program through the “buddy” system. A volunteer client mentor will be assigned to ensure that the hearing challenged person is included in all program activities, made aware of unsafe situations, and assisted upon personal request.

ADAPTIVE DEVICES

Adaptive Devices and related equipment are available, or resources to such are available, to persons with special needs. Examples of such devices include equipment to assist the hearing impaired/challenged; individuals to provide signing or translation services; language assistance; mobility assistance as well as materials and equipment for individuals who are visually challenged.

SINGLE-POINT-OF-CONTACT: Services for the deaf and hard of hearing shall be through a single point of contact and conspicuous notices of availability of auxiliary aids and services shall be posted.

DETAILED PROCEDURES:

1. Instructions to staff to timely request an auxiliary aid or service for customers or companions, who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Staff are aware of the designated SPOC and would immediately contact this person. The designated point of contact for Deaf and Hard of Hearing has been assigned, has the forms, can identify the need and arrange for services. SPOC Duties are outlined on the attached as Exhibit A.
2. Customer Preference – The customer or companion’s preference is the primary consideration in what auxiliary aid or service is provided. See Exhibit A SPOC Duties.
3. Instructions to staff – on what to do if communication through an auxiliary aid or service for customers or companions, who are deaf or hard of hearing, is found to be ineffective: In this situation, the designed Single Point Of Contact [SPOC] person would evaluate and seek alternatives. See Exhibit Am SPOC Duties.
4. Instructions to staff – for staff on procedures to be followed in the event WestCare denies a requested auxiliary aid or service to a customer or companion who is deaf or hard of hearing. The only denial would be if the person does not meet the program admission criteria. Denial determinations can only be made by the Regional Area Director. See Exhibit A, SPOC Duties.
5. Distribution – Distribution to individuals and organizations serving persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency shall be as follows: Information is provided at hire and annually. Special requests for information may be made to the SPOC, who maintains a binder of the 2013 Statewide Auxiliary Aids and Services Plan with Contacts, Posters, Education, etc.
6. Website – WestCare’s Plan for Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall be posted on its website. WestCare Foundation manages the websites for all subsidiaries. WestCare GulfCoast-Florida will request that a link be posted on the Florida Website, will post the Plan on its Internet, and will publish information in its monthly newsletter.
7. Alternative formats - WestCare’s Plan for Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall be available in alternative formats. The Area Director is in the process of seeking assistance with alternatives formats: examples: translation through TDD/TTY and braille or audio for the blind and. See Exhibit A, SPOC duties.

8. Documentation – Record retention of documentation and forms evidencing when WestCare provides auxiliary aids and services to customers or companions shall include the following: WestCare has assigned a Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC), who is essentially responsible for maintaining files that document the required information for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. This person also maintains a list of the information that is reported on the Monthly Report that providers send to DCF or designee. See exhibit A, SPOC Duties.
9. Accessibility – WestCare will ensure accessibility at meetings, conference and seminars to persons with disabilities or limited English proficient or deaf or hard of hearing including providing necessary aids and services for those individuals who are in attendance. Also, see the last item in this list for more details.
10. Staff Orientation – WestCare will, within 60 days of commencing employment, ensure that new staff will be trained on how to provide auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
11. Staff Annual Refresher – WestCare will ensure that annual refresher training occurs for all on how to provide auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
12. Sign Language Interpreter – WestCare has a process for obtaining a sign language interpreter for a customer or companion who is deaf or hard of hearing on a 24/7 basis. A list of sign language interpreters is maintained in the office of the SPOC. The SPOC will verify the certification of sign language interpreters.
13. Foreign Language Interpreters – WestCare will maintain a list of qualified foreign language interpreters. A list of foreign language interpreters is maintained in the office of the SPOC.
14. Access to TDD/TTY – WestCare will maintain access to TDD/TTY.
15. Florida Relay Services – WestCare will maintain contact information for the Florida Relay Services as follows: Listed on Exhibit A along with duties of Single Point of Contact.
16. Video Remote Interpreting & Video Relay Interpreting - WestCare will maintain contact information for the Video Remote Interpreting and Video Relay Interpreting as follows: See Exhibit A, SPOC duties.
17. Assistive Listening Devices - WestCare will maintain Assistive Listening Devices. If an employee of WestCare is assisting a deaf or hard-of-hearing client or their companion and is unfamiliar with an auxiliary aid or service requested, the employee may contact the SPOC (or designee), or if the SPOC (or designee) is unavailable, the employee can go to the website or see the phone numbers listed on Exhibit A, SPOC Duties.
18. Captioning in Real Time [CART] - WestCare will maintain contact information for the CART as follows: See Exhibit A, SPOC Duties.

19. Grievance Policy – A review of the Grievance Policy has been completed by CFBHN staff to ensure that the needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients are met. WestCare staff review the Grievance Process with the client through the interpreter. The Grievance Policy and forms are posted in all WestCare programs and clients are made aware of the locations.
20. If WestCare holds a public meeting, conference, or seminar, an addendum to the documents advertising the events will be added, stating: “Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in these meetings is asked to advise WestCare at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting WestCare’s main office at at: (727) 460-6767. The main office will then notify the SPOC. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact WestCare using the Florida Relay Service, (800) 955-8771 (TDD) or (800) 955-8770 (Voice.)”

EXHIBIT A

Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Duties:

Responsibilities of [WestCare]

All Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing customers/companions in need of Auxiliary Aids will be offered these Services at no additional cost as per Federal Law and contractual agreement. WestCare has assigned a Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC), who is essentially responsible for maintaining files that document the required information for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. This person also maintains a list of the information that is reported on the Monthly Report that providers send to DCF.

Duties of the Sim.de Point of Contact for WestCare

Single Point-of-Contact duties will include but not be limited to:

- o Ensuring that information regarding no-cost auxiliary aids available to customers/companions that are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing is posted so that it is easily visible when entering the building. This includes the Interpreter services for the hearing-impaired poster, the DCF Non-discrimination poster, and the Limited English proficient poster.
- Conducting an assessment prior to services to determine the customer or companion's preferred method of communication. SPOC (or designee) shall accomplish this by first completing the Customer Companion Communication Assessment Form and the Request for or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance Form. These items (when fully completed) will be kept on file in the SPOC's office. The customer/companion will be provided with the preferred method of communication and auxiliary aid services needed.
 - Provision of services in a timely manner. If the customer/companion has a scheduled appointment, the preferred method of communication shall be available at the time of the appointment. If for any reason the preferred method of communication is unavailable, a reasonable substitute will be available as soon as possible, but no later than two hours after the scheduled appointment. SPOC (or designee) will ensure that the preferred method of communication is available within two hours (or no later than twenty-four (24) hours) of a non-scheduled appointment when customer/companion is hearing impaired. If an auxiliary aid or service is found to be ineffective, SPOC (or designee) shall re-assess to determine an alternative form of communication that will be used in order to ensure the customer/companion fully understands the information that is being provided.
- In no event will an auxiliary aid or service to a customer or companion who is deaf or hard-of-hearing be denied. Denial determinations can only be made by the Regional Area Director or the Contracted Client Services Provider Administrator (or designee).
- Ensuring certified interpreters (when requested) are available at time of scheduled appointments for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing customers/companions. SPOC (or designee) shall obtain verification of the interpreter's certification,

and shall keep it on file for future reference. A list of certified interpreters is maintained in the office of the SPOC.

- Ensuring qualified foreign language interpreters (when requested) are available at time of scheduled appointments for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing customers/companions. SPOC (or designee) shall obtain verification of the interpreter's certification and keep it on file for future reference. A list of foreign language interpreters is maintained in the office of the SPOC.
- Ensuring that individuals are aware of and know how to use the Florida Relay Service. To call the Florida Relay, dial 7-1-1, or use the following toll free numbers:
 - 1-800-955-8771 (TTY)
 - 1-800-955-3771 (ASCII)
 - 1-800-955-5334 (STS)
 - 1-800-955-8770 (Voice)
 - 1-877-955-8260 (VCO-Direct)
 - 1-877-955-8773 (Spanish)
 - 1-877-955-8707 (French Creole)

WestCare does not have access to TDD/TTY equipment, but can accept phone calls from individuals who use these items to communicate.

- Maintain information on Pocket Talkers and Personal Listening Devices in the office of the SPOC.
 - Ensuring that individuals are aware of and know how to use the Federal Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and Video Relay Interpreting (also known as the Federal Video Relay service, or VRS) services.
 - The Video Remote Interpreting software can be downloaded at www.fedvrs.us/supports/what_is_vrs.
The phone number is (877) 689-7775
Service is available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.,
English-to-Spanish Translation is available with 24 hours' notice.

WestCare does not currently have access to the equipment needed for Video Remote/Relay Interpreting, but can accept phone calls from those individuals who use these items to communicate.

- Ensuring that individuals are aware of and know how to use the Captioning in Real Time (CART) Services. CART providers can be found online at <http://psl.ncra.org/index.asp>. A list of CART providers in Florida is maintained in the office of the SPOC.

- o Maintain the monthly report log of providers submissions to the DCF website by the 5th of each month.