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**SalusCare, Inc.**

**Auxiliary Aids and Services Plan  
For Customers and Companions Who Report as Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing**

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09/15/2023  
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## **Auxiliary Aids and Services Plan For Customers and Companions Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing**

### **Training for Direct Service Employees**

All new direct service employees to SalusCare, Inc. are required to complete the on-line Effective Communication with our Customers who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing training during their orientation period to the agency, well within the 60-day requirement for this training to occur.

Each employee is required to take the annual revised training, Effective Communication with our Customers who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, required by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The managing entity, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. (CFBHN) notifies SalusCare when the training is available and requires a letter of attestation from SalusCare to evidence that staff have taken the training. SalusCare Human Resources provides oversight and tracking of employee training and the Quality Management department provides the communication to CFBHN.

When a customer or companion identifies themselves as deaf or hard-of-hearing upon seeking services from SalusCare, all direct service employees and support staff recognize it is the customer's right and choice to make the determination of the type of communication assistance they may need. Employees have access to the following forms on paper and in SmartCare, the electronic health record utilized at SalusCare:

- Customer and Companion Auxiliary Aids and Services Record Form
- Customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance Form
- Customer Feedback Form
- Communication Plan Form (for residential and continuing care customers and companions)

Instructions for completing these forms are included with the forms. In addition to these forms, the Single Point of Access (SPOC) or his/her agency designee, maintains forms and submits the Auxiliary Aid Service Record Monthly Summary Report.

### **Public Access to the Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan**

The Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan (hereafter known as The Plan) is posted on the agency's website [Saluscareflorida.org/privacy-policy](http://Saluscareflorida.org/privacy-policy). Information regarding no-cost auxiliary aids available to customers/companions who identify as D/deaf or hard-of-hearing is posted in patient areas so that it is easily visible. This includes the interpreter services for the hearing-impaired

poster, the DCF Non-discrimination poster, and the limited English proficiency poster. When a customer or companion requests a written copy of the plan, one will be provided by the Single Point of Contact. In addition to this plan, each employee has a copy of the Auxiliary Aids/Services Quick Sheet.

### **Timely provision of services**

Instructions have been provided, in writing, to each direct service employee (hereafter known as employees) that all efforts are to be made to provide the services requested by the customer or companion who is deaf or hard-of-hearing (hereafter known as customer or companion) on a 24/7 basis.

For scheduled appointments, the certified interpreter must be present at the time of the appointment. Most services provided at SalusCare are aid-essential services.

For non-scheduled aid-essential (intakes, evaluations, etc.) the certified interpreter must be present within two hours.

For non-scheduled and non-aid essential communications, the certified interpreter must be present no later than the next business day.

Employees are instructed that customers or companions make the determination of the services they need. Services are provided in a timely manner and are at no cost to the customer or companion. 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. Alternative auxiliary aids, like pen and paper, can be used while waiting for the certified interpreter. However, pen and paper or lip reading cannot be used in place of calling for a certified interpreter to arrive within the time frames (i.e. if a patient is seen after hours, the employee cannot use the alternative and wait until the next morning for an interpreter. The alternative, pen and paper, can be used during the two hours waiting for the interpreter.

Deaf Services Center of Southwest Florida provides a 24/7 access number to schedule. An alternative to scheduling a certified interpreter from Deaf Services Center is to subscribe to a Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) service. Accessing ASL certified interpreters in this manner requires a laptop camera, speakers and access via the internet.

### **Limited English Speakers**

SalusCare, Inc. maintains a current listing of translation providers who are on staff as employees of the company. This listing is available through the Human Resource Department, through the Quality Management Department, and is posted on Sharepoint with Human Resource policies.

**What to do if the intervention is not effective**

If the intervention is not effective in providing needed assistance to the customer or companion, all efforts are made by the employees and supervisors to remedy the problem. If further assistance is needed, employees are to contact the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) or his/her agency designee. If further actions are needed, the SPOC or employee is to call the 504 Coordinator.

**Denial of Requested Service**

When employees identify the need to deny a requested service, employees are instructed to contact the agency's Chief Executive Officer or the 504 Coordinator for authorization to do so. Employees are instructed they are not allowed under any circumstances to deny the requested service without the above authority.

**Records Retention**

All Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid and Service Records forms, Customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance forms, Communication Plan forms, and records of Auxiliary Aid Service Record Monthly Summary Reports will be maintained in the patient chart as per requirement by Central Florida Behavioral Health Network. SalusCare Quality Management will maintain a record of form copies provided to QM by program staff and utilized in the monthly reports.

**Accessibility at Other Agency Events**

All employees have been instructed that the agency is to ensure accessibility at all meetings, conferences, and seminars to persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency or D/deaf or hard-of-hearing, including providing necessary aids and services for those individuals who are in attendance. The contact name and number for requesting accommodations is included on all meeting notices, flyers, and advertisements.

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for Deaf, hard of Hearing, Hearing Loss**

A network of crisis centers offers many services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, including veterans that are struggling. Patients can videophone, call, text, or chat online with the Lifeline crisis counselor for support. The Lifeline is available 24/7 and it is confidential. For Deaf/Hard of Hearing ASL Users, Call 988 for videophone, text 988 or chat online [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

**How to Obtain an American Sign Language Certified Interpreter**

Each employee is trained that the company employs the use of only certified sign language interpreters. American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL Interpreters) are certified through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). Verification can be accomplished online through the RID's website: <https://www.rid.org/acct-app/index.cfm?action=search.members> . At the

website, enter the interpreter's name and if they are certified, their name will appear. If they are not certified, they may not be utilized to interpret for DCF consumers.

If it is not possible to get a certified sign language interpreter immediately, or after hours, employees are trained to employ the best services available. These temporary services may include written communication, use of a Pocket Talker, or Florida Video Remote Services. If the requested service is not immediately available, all efforts are to be made for this service to be provided as soon as possible.

The Video Relay Services (VRS) is limited to phone calls only and is a federally funded program providing telephone access to persons who sign. This service is NOT available for in-person meetings with a customer. It is illegal to use and is considered fraud and abuse by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC).

### **Auxiliary Aids Available for Customers and Companions who are deaf of hard of hearing**

Below is information on how to obtain an auxiliary aid when requested by a customer or companion:

- Pocket Talkers – Pocket talkers and Personal FM Listening devices are assisted listening devices. Pocket Talkers provide a ten-foot radius and Personal FM Listening devices are appropriate for use in large group areas. The Personal FM Listening device requires the speaker to use a microphone and the listener to use a headset. Pocket Talkers are available at the front desk area of Evans Campus and will be available at Emergency Services and Cape Coral Campus upon reopening. Contact the Outpatient Practice Manager 239-275-3222 or 239-240-6493
- Motiva FM Systems - Order through the SalusCare Purchasing Department 791-1501
- Deaf Services of SWFL - (239) 461-0334 - has equipment which patients can access independently
- Deaf Services of SWFL has volume-controlled phones, TTY's, access to Video phone at their center, educational outreach services to businesses
- Communication Access Realtime Transcription (CART) Michele Hordinski, RMR, CRR Court Reporter, Von Ahn Associates, Inc. (239) 332-7443 (office) (239)223-0463 (cell) Tmds70@gmail.com
- Florida Video Relay Services (800) 955-8770 or 711

### Service Providers

When an interpreter is not certified, SalusCare cannot utilize this interpreter's services.

**Always make sure the interpreter is Certified when requesting one.**

Below are service providers who can assist with customer or companion requests for auxiliary services:

- ASL Interpreters –Sally J. Pimentel Deaf & Hard of Hearing Center (239) 461-0334, (239) 247-5821 VP  
This company is a not-for-profit agency and uses interpreters that may not be certified. Requests are taken between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.  
The cost of the ASL interpreter is a flat rate billing of \$150.00 per 2 hours, with additional fees for after-hours and weekends; when the certified ASL interpreter presents, but the patient does not, SalusCare is billed for the service.
- Deaf-Blind Services -Deaf Services Center of SW FL (239) 461-0334
- Associated Interpreters for the Deaf (AI Deaf) - Brooks (Jody) Belcher (239) 810-9554 and 239.699.5751 (Emergency); Leave a message; Use the emergency number after hours and weekends, when the need is urgent.

This company is a for-profit agency that only uses certified interpreters, as required by DCF.

AI Deaf is 24/7 for phone calls and requests

AI Deaf prioritizes SalusCare requests

The current cost of the ASL interpreter is a flat rate billing of \$150.00 per 2 hours (no matter if the session last for 30 minutes or the whole 2 hours); last minute requests less than 48 hours notice is a flat rate of \$180 (\$90/hr). When the certified ASL interpreter presents, but the patient does not, SalusCare is billed for the service.

- Cyacom VRI services <https://www.cyacom.com/services/VRI>
- Florida Division of Blind Services (850) 245-0300
- Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (850) 487 -3278
- Florida Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) (877) 709-5798
- Florida Video Telecommunications Relay (800) 222-3448
- Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (866) 602-3275

### Documents Included in the Plan

The plan contains the following documents as references:

- CFOP 60-10 Chapter 4

- Customer and Companion Auxiliary Aids and Services Record Form
- Customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance Form
- Customer Feedback Form
- Communication Plans (for residential programs)
- Monthly Reporting Form for SPOC's
- SalusCare, Inc. Translation Providers

Instructions for completing these forms are included with the forms. In addition to these forms, the Single Point of Access maintains and submits the Auxiliary Aid Service Record Monthly Summary Report.

### **Customers or Companions Complaints**

All employees are trained to make all efforts possible to meet the needs of customers and companions, and to request assistance from the SPOC. If this does not resolve the situation, a customer is encouraged and will be provided assistance in contacting one of the following parties:

- Surita Jageashwar, MBA, BHSA  
Single Point of Contact (SPOC)  
SalusCare, Inc.  
3763 Evans Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
Phone: (239) 275-3222  
Direct: (239) 333-2237  
[SJageashwar@saluscareflorida.org](mailto:SJageashwar@saluscareflorida.org)
- Sarah Conti, Quality Management Analyst  
SalusCare, Inc.  
3763 Evans Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
Phone: 239 275-3222  
Direct: (239-791-1529)  
[SConti@saluscareflorida.org](mailto:SConti@saluscareflorida.org)
- Julie Patel, Single Point of Contact (SPOC)  
Central Florida Behavioral Health Network  
719 US-301 South  
Tampa, FL 33619  
Phone: 813 740-4811  
[JPatel@cfbhn.org](mailto:JPatel@cfbhn.org)

- Dick Valentine, Compliance Manager  
Civil Rights, EEO & HIPAA  
Office of Civil Rights  
Florida Department of Children and Families  
Phone: 904-485-9682  
[Dick.Valentine@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Dick.Valentine@myflfamilies.com)
  
- Patricia Overway (nee Simpson), MBA, BS (Psych), FCCM, SMPS  
Contract Manager – Government Operations Consultant II  
Florida Department of Children and Families  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Suncoast Region  
9393 N Florida Ave, Suite 500  
Tampa, FL 33612  
Cell: 813-638-6312  
[Patricia.Overway@MyFIFamilies.com](mailto:Patricia.Overway@MyFIFamilies.com)

Additional contacts:

- 1) Department of Children and Families (DCF)  
Office of Civil Rights  
1317 Winewood Boulevard  
Building 1, Room 110  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700  
(850) 487-1901  
TDD (850) 922-9220  
Fax (850) 921-8470
  
- 2) United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)  
Attention: Office for Civil Rights  
Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 3B70  
61 Forsyth Street, SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8909  
(404) 562-7888  
TDD/TTY (404) 331-2867  
Fax (404) 562-7881
  
- 3) United States Department of Justice (USDOJ)  
Office for Civil Rights -Office of Justice Programs  
810 7th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 307-0690  
TDD/TTY (202) 307-2027

Fax (202) 616-9865

- 4) United States Department of Justice (USDOJ)  
Civil Rights Division -Disability Rights Section  
1425 New York Avenue  
Washington, DC 20530  
(800) 514-0301  
TDD/TTY (800) 514-0383
  
- 5) For information on how to file a complaint of discrimination, or to obtain information of a civil rights nature, contact the Office of Civil rights (OCR)  
Hotline: 1-800-368-1019 (Voice) 1-800-537-7697 (TDD)  
E-Mail: [ocrmail@hhs.gov](mailto:ocrmail@hhs.gov) Website: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr>

### **Auxiliary Aids/Services Quick Sheet**

#### What is required to provide services for persons identifying as D/deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

Anyone who presents for services and identifies themselves as D/deaf or hard-of-hearing is provided free access to a preferred method of communication.

#### Who determines the level of hearing the client or companion has?

- The client or companion

#### What is a "companion"?

- The companion is the person who "speaks" (makes decisions) for the client

#### What services do we have to provide for patients?

- For scheduled appointments, the certified interpreter must be present at the time of the appointment.
- For non-scheduled aid-essential (intakes, evaluations, etc.) the certified interpreter must be present within two hours. For non-scheduled and non-aid essential communications, the certified interpreter must be present no later than the next business day.
- For non-scheduled and non-aid essential communications, the certified interpreter must be present no later than the next business day. 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. Alternative auxiliary aids, like pen and paper, can be used while waiting for the certified interpreter.
- 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. Alternative auxiliary aids, like pen and paper, can be used while waiting for the certified interpreter

#### What services are available?

- ASL Certified interpreters from Deaf Services of SW FL; phone: 461-0334)
- Pocket talker
- Written communication

- Lip reading or speech reading has only been found to be 35% effective and is only used as an alternate until the certified interpreter in the customer or companion's identified language is available

How many forms do we need to fill out?

- Customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance
- Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid and Service Record

What are some helpful links?

- Communication Access Realtime Transcription (CART)  
Michele Hordinski, RMR, CRR, Court Reporter, Von Ahn Associates, Inc.; (239) 332-7443 (office); (239) 223-0463 (cell) ; [Tmds70@gmail.com](mailto:Tmds70@gmail.com)
- ASL Certified Interpreters - Deaf Services Center of SW FL (239) 461-0334
- Deaf-Blind Services - Deaf Services Center of SW FL (239) 461-0334
- Florida Video Relay Services (800) 955-8770 or 711 (illegal to use for in-person meetings)
- Florida Division of Blind Services (850) 488-1330
- Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (850) 487-3278
- Florida Video Remote Interpreting (877) 709•5798
- Florida Video Telecommunications Relay (800) 222-3448
- Associated Interpreters for the Deaf (AI Deaf) - Brooks (Jodie) Blecher 239.810.955

### **Required Reporting**

SalusCare provides monthly reports to the Department of Children and Families and the managing entity, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network. Monthly Report for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing is due to be submitted on the DCF website [https://fs16.formsite.com/DCFTraining/Monthly-Summary-Report/form\\_login.html](https://fs16.formsite.com/DCFTraining/Monthly-Summary-Report/form_login.html) no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month. SalusCare contract number is QD1A9, and the Contract manger is:

Patricia Overway (nee Simpson), MBA, BS (Psych), FCCM, SMPS  
Contract Manager – Government Operations Consultant II  
Florida Department of Children and Families  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Suncoast Region  
9393 N Florida Ave, Suite 500  
Tampa, FL 33612  
Cell: 813-638-6312  
Email: [Patricia.Overway@MyFIFamilies.com](mailto:Patricia.Overway@MyFIFamilies.com)