A message from Washington State Health Care Authority.

Over the Phone Interpreting (OPI) for spoken languages temporarily available during COVID-19 pandemic

OPI will be available for dates of service on or after April 16, 2020. As a reminder, HCA will not allow in-person interpretation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision was made out of an abundance of caution and to comply with the Governor's [Stay Home, Stay Healthy order](#).

Universal Language Service (Universal) will convert all prescheduled in-person requests with dates of service occurring during the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order to OPI by April 13, 2020. Requests may remain scheduled as OPI for up to two weeks beyond the order as accounts and jobs are updated to revert back to in-person interpreting. Additional dates of service may be converted should the order be extended and/or ongoing precautions continue to be needed. HCA will notify you through GovDelivery if this occurs.

What to expect
You will receive notifications from Universal when your existing requests are converted to OPI. Interpreters who do not wish to perform OPI will give the request back, making it available for another interpreter to accept. You will receive notifications from Universal when the status of a request changes, as you do now.

How to submit a request for OPI
During the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, all requester accounts will be enabled for OPI, after which you can begin using the service immediately by logging into the Universal scheduling portal. During the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, you will only be able to request OPI interpreters. Submitting a request for an OPI interpreter is completed the same way you currently request in-person interpreters.

You will log into the Universal scheduling portal and create a new interpreter request. The only difference is that you will only be able to select "Phone Pre-Scheduled" from the drop down menu in the 'Type of Service' field. While you will still be able to see other job types, you will not be able to select them.

If you have extenuating circumstances that require an in-person interpreter, contact Universal directly at scheduling@ulsonline.net or call (425) 454 8074.

How does an OPI request work?
At the time of the appointment, the provider will call Universal whose agents will then connect the provider and the interpreter together. If the appointment is for telehealth and the client is remote, Universal will connect the provider, interpreter, and client.

How do I check interpreters in/out for an OPI request?
You will complete the check in and check out process just like you do now for in-person requests. You must:
1. Log into the Universal scheduling portal
2. Open the request
3. Click the "edit" button in the upper right-hand corner
4. Complete 'Actual Start' and 'Actual End' times

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Where can I get more information?

Universal has created a dedicated webpage where the detailed instructions and informational materials are available. Please visit Universal's website for more information, including webinars and requester guidelines. HCA provides information through GovDelivery and on our Interpreter Services website. Please visit both frequently. If you have questions, you can reach HCA at INTERPRETERSVCS@hca.wa.gov.