## **Communication in Outpatient Settings**

#### **Providers**

Establishing a plan for effective communication with your patient is critical in delivering safe and competent care. A plan should be developed at the first point of contact with the patient. Including a **Communication Access Plan (CAP)** in the patient's EMR or paper chart will ensure accurate and consistent information for all staff and health care providers.

# **Scheduling Appointments**

## **Online Scheduling**

Online patient portals should be utilized for hard of hearing and deaf patients, whenever possible. Make the CAP available through the portal and ask the patient to complete it.

## **Phone Scheduling**

Scheduling appointments may require additional time if the patient is using a captioned phone or calling through a relay operator.

- Ask *all* patients if they need communication assistance for their visits.
- Ask patients to email or fax a copy of their CAP, or bring a copy to their appointment.
- Discuss and determine what aids and services are available and will be provided for patient's appointment.
- Repeat back date and time of appointment to confirm understanding.
- Send email to patient confirming date and time of appointment.
- Provide patient with text number or email address to notify staff if they will be late for an appointment.
- Display universal "hearing loss" symbol on all forms and paper chart.



# **Outpatient Visits**

#### **Prior to Patient's Arrival**

- Be sure communication aids and services are available and ready for use.
- Be sure staff is familiar with devices and services.
- Highlight sections of forms to be completed by patient.
- Be sure TV in the waiting area has the captions displayed.

#### Patient's Arrival

- Ask patients to complete a CAP if they have not already done so.
- Refer to the CAP to identify how patient prefers to be alerted when they are ready to be seen by the provider.
- Look directly at the patient when speaking.
- When escorting patient to dressing room or treatment room, stop and face them before speaking.

Refer to <u>Communicating with Hard of Hearing and Deaf Patients</u> in the Provider section of this Guide for more information.

#### Visit with Provider

- Review patient's CAP and allow time to discuss communication devices or services to be used.
- Provide in writing, all information related to treatment, diagnoses, follow- up, and medication, including any ototoxic effects.
- Use teach-back to encourage questions and ensure understanding.
- Provide name, phone number, and email address of contact person if patient has questions or concerns.
- Document aids and services used during the visit in the EMR or paper chart.

