DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/ID PROGRAM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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**Title:** Accessibility of Intellectual Disability Services for Individuals who are Deaf or who have Limited English Proficiency

**Policy:** Dauphin County will provide language assistance for individuals and companions who are Deaf or who have Limited English Proficiency in order to provide meaningful access and equal opportunity to intellectual disability (ID) services in compliance with ODP and ADA requirements.

**Definitions:**

An individual who is Deaf (as defined by the ODP Bulletin 00-14-04) is a person who:
- As a result of a hearing impairment, the person is unable to understand or communicate verbal expressions at a level commensurate with his or her intellectual ability, even when wearing hearing aids; OR
- As a result of a hearing impairment, his or her primary language is Sign Language.

An individual with Limited English Proficiency: A Limited English Proficiency (LEP) person has been defined by the U.S. Department of Human Services as someone that does not speak English as his/her primary language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

**Companion:** A family member, friend, or associate of an individual seeking access to a service, program, or activity of a public entity, who, along with the individual, is an appropriate person with whom the public entity should communicate.

**Sign Language:** Includes American Sign Language (ASL), sign language from other countries such as Spanish Sign Language, Signed Exact English, a mixture of ASL and Signed English; tactile sign, and visual – gestural communication.
**Procedure:**

I. **Accessibility of ID Services for Individuals who are Deaf:**

1) The Dauphin County Intellectual Disabilities Program will utilize formal or informal assessments in order to determine an individual’s need for communication assistance. If communication assistance is needed, the individual is provided choice in the communication assistance unless the chosen assistance is different than the assistance recommended in the most recent communication assessment. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, companions who require communication assistance will have choice in the type of communication assistance provided in order to allow the companion to assist the individual with disabilities.

2) If an individual is determined to need a Sign Language Interpreter, family and friends of the individual will only be utilized to provide interpreting services in these situations:
   A. The family or friend is rendering a paid service at the time where it would be expected that he or she will perform interpreting services;
   B. An emergency situation arises where the safety and welfare of the public or the individual is of paramount importance; or
   C. Other Sign Language Interpreters have been offered and refused and both parties have agreed to use the family member or friend.

3) In all other situations, Dauphin County Intellectual Disabilities Program, through their Supports Coordination Organization, will assist the individual and/or companion in obtaining a qualified interpreter. Dauphin County Intellectual Disabilities Program will utilize the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing’s Interpreter Search or other local resources in order to obtain a qualified interpreter. If a qualified interpreter cannot be located, the program will contact the ODP Deaf Services Coordinator for additional assistance. The county program will contract with qualified interpreters on an as needed basis in order to utilize base funding to pay for this service.

4) If the individual and/or his/her companion requests communication assistance other than a qualified interpreter, the county program will attempt to utilize the PA Assistive Technology Lending Library or other local resources in order to borrow the needed technology.

5) The Dauphin County Intellectual Disabilities Program will ensure communication assistance is provided to the individual and/or companion as needed during the Registration, Intake, and Eligibility Determination processes. The county program will ensure needed communication assistance is provided as needed to individuals during the receipt of base and waiver-funded services and to individuals/companions during ISP team meetings. The county program will ensure communication assistance is provided to the individual and/or companion as needed during any activity required or related to the
Administrative Entity Operating Agreement, including any functions that are purchased or delegated to another entity.

6) In compliance with the ADA, the Dauphin County Intellectual Disabilities Program will offer communication assistance to individuals and/or companions who require communication assistance in order to comply with this requirement.

II. Accessibility of ID Services for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

1) The Dauphin County Intellectual Disabilities Program will notify all LEP persons that communication assistance is available and will ensure communication assistance, in the form of a qualified interpreter (either in person or over the telephone) or translated written materials, is provided to the individual and/or companion as needed during the Registration, Intake, and Eligibility Determination processes. The county program will utilize local resources in order to find a qualified interpreter for an LEP person. The county program will also ensure needed communication assistance is provided as needed to individuals during the receipt of base and waiver-funded services and to individuals/companions during ISP (Individual Supports Plan) team meetings. The county program will ensure communication assistance is provided to the individual and/or companion as needed during any activity required or related to the Administrative Entity Operating Agreement, including any functions that are purchased or delegated to another entity.

2) If an individual is determined to need an interpreter, family and friends of the individual will only be utilized to provide interpreting services in these situations:
   A. The family or friend is rendering a paid service at the time where it would be expected that he or she will perform interpreting services;
   B. An emergency situation arises where the safety and welfare of the public or the individual is of paramount importance; or
   C. Other Sign Language Interpreters have been offered and refused and both parties have agreed to use the family member or friend.

3) The Dauphin County Intellectual Disabilities Program through the CMU, Dauphin County Supports Coordination Organization, will contact qualified interpreters on an as needed basis. Base funding will be utilized to pay for this service. If translated written materials are needed, the Supports Coordinator at the CMU will locate the needed translated materials using state, regional or local resources. County staff will assist as needed.

References:
ODP Bulletin 00-14-04 “Accessibility of Intellectual Disability Services for Individuals who are Deaf”
ODP Bulletin 00-04-13 “Limited English Proficiency (LEP)”; Americans with Disabilities Act