

Minnesota Interpreters Newsletter

Interpreter Stakeholder's Group



Need to Know: Respirators for Airborne Precautions When Interpreting Encounters Involve TB Patients

On occasion, medical interpreters arrive at hospitals to find out that the patients are on “Airborne Precautions” isolation because they have confirmed or suspected tuberculosis (TB) disease. Interpreters should put on respirators BEFORE entering the isolation room to protect themselves from breathing the airborne germs. Two types of respirators are usually available for interpreters to wear prior to entering the Airborne Precautions isolation rooms. One type is the non-powered respirator approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and the other type is the Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) with high-efficiency filters.

The non-powered respirators come in different makes and sizes. For example, the disposable N95 respirator has a filter efficiency level of 95% or greater against airborne particulates, and the N100 respirator filters at least 99.97% of airborne particulates. But most importantly, wearing respirators without tight facial fit would result in facial-seal leakage, exposing the interpreters to airborne germs. Therefore, fit-testing should be done PRIOR TO USE to provide you with the respirator that best fits your face. Persons with facial hair, such as beard, should not use this type of respirator.

See <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/infectioncontrol/ppe/comp/n95.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/prevention/rphcs.htm>

PAPR is battery operated. it consists of face piece, breathing tube, battery-operated blower, and high-efficiency particulate filters. A PAPR uses a blower to pass contaminated air through the filter which removes the airborne germs, and supplies purified air to the face piece.

Use of PAPRs does not require fit-testing. However, interpreters should consult with medical staff on how to use a PAPR respirator properly (i.e. how to put on, position, adjust, and remove respirator)

see <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/infectioncontrol/ppe/comp/papr.html>

Regions Hospital is seeking a full-time Interpreter Services supervisor at their St. Paul campus. Their ideal candidate will hold a Bachelor's degree; have at least 1 year of leadership experience and previous interpreting experience. An Associate's degree with 10 years of interpreting experience can substitute for the Bachelor's degree requirement. Completion of a Nationally Accredited Interpreter Training Program is preferred. Candidates with ASL & RID certification highly encouraged to apply.

The position will oversee day-to-day operations of interpreter services at one or more sites, managing 20+ interpreter staff, managing staffing levels to meet service and financial goals, coordinate 24/7 availability of professional language services, and ensure compliance with national certification requirements for ASL interpreter staff.

For consideration, please apply online at www.regionshospital.com/careers Job ID#27118.EOE