



**Payment Policies for Healthcare Services
Provided to Injured Workers and Crime Victims**

Temporary Interpretive Services via Video or Telephone Policy

Effective March 9, 2020



Link: Look for possible **updates and corrections** to these payment policies at:

www.Lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Providers/Billing/FeeSched/2019/



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Definitions

- ▶ **Emergency epidemic:** When the Governor declares a state of emergency that directs state agencies to use all resources necessary to prepare for and respond to an outbreak. In this situation, L&I may implement modified policies (such as a temporary telehealth policy) to support providers and workers. The duration of these modified policies will initially expire July 3, 2020, after which L&I will assess if a continuation is necessary.
- ▶ **In-Person interpreter:** When the interpreter and the provider are face-to-face. This is typically done in a clinical setting. This applies to spoken and sign interpreters.
- ▶ **Originating site:** The place where the worker is located when receiving telehealth services. The worker's home may be the originating site.
- ▶ **Telehealth and Telemedicine:** For the purposes of this policy, the terms telehealth and telemedicine are used interchangeably and refer to face-to-face services delivered by a qualified medical provider through a real-time video connection. These services are not appropriate without a video connection with the worker.
- ▶ **Telephonic interpretation:** Interpreter communication between the provider and the patient that doesn't use a video connection.
- ▶ **Video interpretation:** Interpreter communication that uses video with a provider and patient.



Payment policy: Temporary Interpretive Services via Video or Telephone

This temporary policy doesn't replace [Chapter 14: Interpreter Services](#), or any other chapters within the Medical Aid Rules and Fee Schedules (MARFS). This policy will expire June 30, 2021 unless the department determines an extension is appropriate. The department also reserves the right to terminate this policy before June 30, 2021.

This temporary policy expands coverage to allow **in-person interpreters** to provide:

- **Video interpretation, or**
- **Telephonic interpretation.**

The medical or vocational provider determines the type of interpretation (in-person, telephonic, or video interpretation) needed for the appointment.

This policy allows for the temporary coverage of an **in-person interpreter** during a **telehealth** visit using video. This is known as **video interpretation**. Video interpretation cannot be performed when the worker and interpreter are in the same location.

If the appointment occurs via **telephone** where there is no visual connection with the provider and the worker, the provider may either use an **in-person interpreter** in a three-way call, or one of the two [contracted vendors](#). This is known as **telephonic interpretation**.

► Requirements for Interpretation

The provider initiates a **video** or **telephonic** visit. Interpreters aren't authorized to begin the visit.

► Billing and document requirements

Interpreter Services Appointment Record

The interpreter must submit an [Interpreter Services Appointment Record \(ISAR\)](#).

In-person interpretation:

- If the interpreter provides interpretive services in the clinic with the provider, the provider's signature must be obtained for the ISAR.
- Use billing code **9989M**. This pays \$0.87/minute, and the 8-hour maximum applies.

- Sign language interpreters bill using **9978M**. This pays \$1.85/minute.

Video Interpretation:

- If the interpreter provides interpretive services via video, document 'video', in the provider's signature line on the ISAR.
- Use billing code **9989M** for **video interpretation services** when there is only 1 worker (video connection with the worker, provider, and interpreter). This code pays \$0.87/minute, and the 8-hour maximum applies.
- Use billing code **9988M** for group interpretation services using **video interpretation services** when there are multiple clients receiving interpretive services at the same time (video connection with the workers, provider, and interpreter). This code pays \$0.87/minute, and the 8-hour maximum applies.
- Sign language interpreters bill using **9978M** for **video interpretation services**. This pays \$1.85/minute.

Telephonic Interpretation:

- If the interpreter provides interpretive services via telephone, document 'telephone' in the provider's signature line on the ISAR.
- Use billing code **9999M** for **telephone interpretation services**.
- This code pays \$0.62/minute, and the 8-hour maximum applies.



Note: **9996M** for "IME no show" is payable only once per worker per day. Prior authorization is required. See billing requirements in [Chapter 14: Interpretive Services](#).

▶ **Duration of temporary policy**

This emergency telehealth policy expires June 30, 2021. If the insurer deems it necessary to extend or terminate this policy, an update and correction will be posted.

▶ **What isn't covered**

Interpreter services conducted when the worker and interpreter are in the same location.

Interpreters aren't authorized to travel to a worker's home.

Interpreters aren't authorized to initiate any services between the provider and the worker.

Wait time isn't authorized under this temporary policy for interpretive services provided via video or telephone.

In-person, telephonic, and video interpreting all have the same 8-hour maximum as defined in [Chapter 14: Interpretive Services](#).

The services not covered in [Chapter 14: Interpretive Services](#) applies to this policy (i.e., personal assistance on behalf of the worker isn't covered).

The insurer won't provide reimbursement to any party for acquiring equipment used for telehealth.



Links: Related topics

If you're looking for more information about...	Then go here:
Administrative rules for "Who may treat"	Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 296-20-015: http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-20-015
Becoming an L&I provider	L&I's website: www.Lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Providers/Becoming/
Billing instructions and forms	Chapter 2: Information for All Providers
Fee schedules for all healthcare facility services	L&I's website: https://lni.wa.gov/patient-care/billing-payments/fee-schedules-and-payment-policies/
Interpretive Services	Chapter 14: Interpretive Services
Interpreter Services Appointment Record (ISAR)	ISAR https://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F245-056-000.pdf
Lookup an Interpreter	https://secure.lni.wa.gov/interpreters/
Temporary Telehealth Policy	Temporary Telehealth Policy: https://www.lni.wa.gov/patient-care/billing-payments/marfsdocs/2019/200309temporarytelehealthpolicy.pdf

Need more help? Call L&I's Provider Hotline at **1-800-848-0811**