FACT SHEET:
INTERPRETER ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

This guide outlines key steps for engaging Interpreters in Clinical Trials to ensure effective communication and consent for patients with language barriers.

Instructions

1. Determine the Need for an Interpreter

- **Assess patient's understanding**: Ask open ended questions about their health and if the patient does not understand and is unable to discuss them, book an Interpreter.
- **Ask the patient if they would like an Interpreter:** ensure they are aware the service is at no cost to them **(free service)**.
- **Review medical record**: If the medical record indicates that an Interpreter is required and the patient had Interpreters booked for them before, book an Interpreter.
- **Verify language/dialect**: Confirm the correct language and dialect with the patient or family.
- **Note:** Sometimes family members insist on interpreting for the patient. Explain that they cannot interpret for the patient and you must engage a professional Interpreter.

2. Booking the Interpreter

- **Contact your Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) and request an Interpreter in the required language/dialect**
- **Indicate that this booking is required for a Clinical Trial. State the urgency, where applicable (this is often the case with visit windows) and whether the patient prefers a female or male Interpreter**
- **Send Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form** (PICF) to HCIS: Ensure these documents are sent to HCIS at the time of the request. Interpreters should have paid time allocated in the clinical trial budget for them to be allocated 1 hour to read them before the appointment.
- **Note:** If re-consenting: Send a tracked version of PICF and explain to the Interpreter Service that only changes will require interpreting.

3. Pre-Appointment Preparation

- **Prepare for in-person Interpreter:**
  - Meet with the Interpreter 5 minutes before the session.

- Discuss the details of what will happen during the consultation.
- Ask the Interpreter if there are any specific terms in Clinical Trials that may be difficult to interpret or culturally inappropriate?

- **Room Setup:** Ensure the room can accommodate all participants (patient, Interpreter, and Health Care staff).
- **Prepare for phone Interpreter:**
  - Ensure a speakerphone is available.
  - Ensure the space is quiet and private for phone interpreting.

4. During the Appointment

- **Maintain clarity:** Speak directly to the patient using first-person language (e.g. 'I' and 'you') and ensure that all statements are clear and concise.
- **Interpreter's Role:** Allow the Interpreter to interpret everything, this takes time.

5. Conclusion of Appointment

- **Offers debrief:** At the end of the visit, offer the Interpreter the opportunity to debrief and discuss any potential challenges or issues.

6. Documentation in Medical Record

- **Document Interpreter's details:**
  - **Full name** and **Staff Link number if using NSW Health Care Interpreter Service** (If using a private or Commonwealth Interpreter service such as TIS National they will not provide their name but the job number. Please document the job number).
  - **Language** and dialect.
  - **Date and time** of Interpreter's attendance.
  - **Version/date of the PICF** used.
- **Witness Requirement:** Ensure that if consent was obtained via an Interpreter, a witness is present.
  - Witness must sign the **witness section** of the PICF. The witness must be over 18 years of age, and must not be the Health Care Interpreter, nor a member of the study team.

7. CTU and HCIS Best Business Practices

- **Interpreting Services costs agreement** – negotiate fees with Interpreter service for the following:
  - Initial PICF- informed consent process.
  - PICF amendment- reconsenting process.
  - Standard follow-up visit – visit explanations.
- **Clinical Trial Research Agreement (CTRA):** Include cost of Interpreter with overhead – ensure schedule 2 includes Interpreter fees.
- **Scheduling with Interpreting Services:**
  - Timeline for providing PICF (minimum 24 hours prior to session) and other trial documents.
  - Time to discuss the trial with Interpreter - just before session.
  - Reminder that training about cancer clinical trials is available online to Interpreters.