



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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PRESS RELEASE

April 11, 2018

The RICDHH Emergency After-Hours Interpreter Referral Service will be Discontinued Effectively on July 1, 2018

Based on the findings of a 2-year review by the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) Emergency Interpreter Referral Service Ad-Hoc Committee, the RICDHH Board of Commissioners voted on February 28, 2018 to discontinue its Emergency After-Hours Interpreter Referral Service for hospital emergencies during evening, weekend, and holiday hours effectively on July 1, 2018.

The decision was based on an in-depth analysis by the RICDHH Emergency Interpreter Referral Service Ad-Hoc committee of the utilization by emergency service providers for the past 12 years. Effective July 1, 2018, hospitals will be responsible for providing access to communication for emergencies after business hours per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

However, the RICDHH office is committed to working with the hospitals, urgent care centers, and other emergency-related providers to ensure that they have appropriate resources ready for communication access (sign language interpreters, CART services, etc.) on an ongoing basis.

Additionally, the RICDHH office is committed to providing 'self-advocacy' training for the deaf and hard of hearing population to ensure that they are equipped to exercise their rights to obtain communication access needs.

State Regular Business Hours for Emergencies

For emergency interpreter and CART service requests during state regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, call 401-222-5300. RICDHH will continue to administer and refer qualified interpreters as soon as possible but it will not have on-call interpreters available dedicated to emergency situations only.

For all non-emergency situations, you can still call RICDHH at 401-222-5300, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm or email at cdhh.interpreter@cdhh.ri.gov.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Pamela Zellner, Program Manager, at 401-256-5511 or at Pamela.Zellner@cdhh.ri.gov. Thank you.

