



San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center  
1001 Potrero Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94110

# **Sustaining Mature Language Services at San Francisco General Hospital**

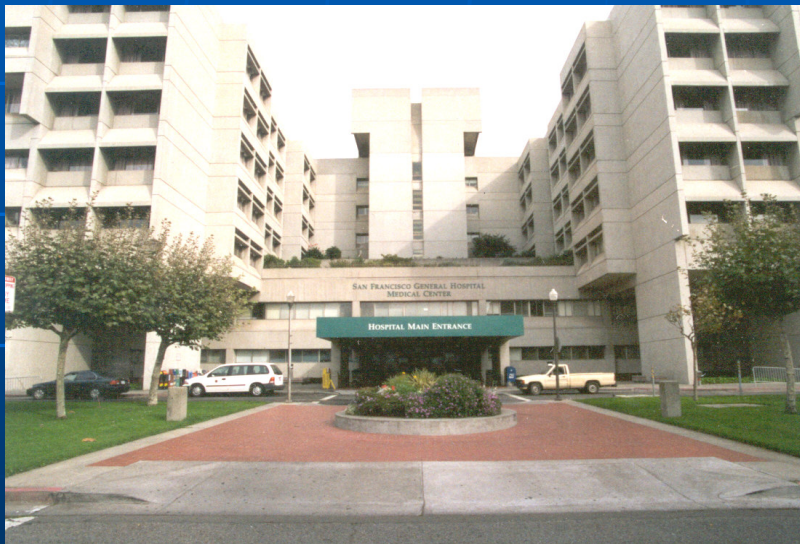
# San Francisco



San Francisco has a population of

- 750,000 people
- 35% of whom are foreign born and
- 24% who self identify as speaking English “less than well”

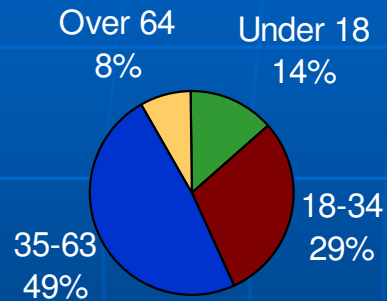
# San Francisco General Hospital



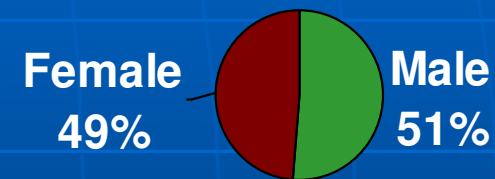
- Level 1 Trauma Center
- Teaching Hospital
- Serve 104,565 Pts/yr
- 700 Licensed beds
- 512,000 Out-Pt visits
- 18,000 Admissions
- Dedicated interpreters on site

# Current Diversity of Patients

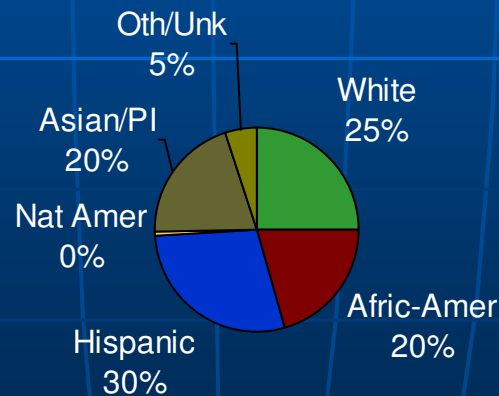
## AGE



## SEX



## RACE



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# Languages Spoken by Patients

- SPANISH- 41 %
- CANTONESE – 37 %
- MANDARIN
- VIETNAMESE
- RUSSIAN
- TAGALOG
- ARABIC
- KOREAN
- THAI
- LAO
- CAMBODIAN
- TIGRINYA
- HINDI
- PORTUGUESE
- FARSI
- MONGOLIAN
- SERBO-CROATIAN
- BURMESE
- JAPANESE
- POLISH

# Background of Interpreter Services Unit

- Early 1970s – Complaint filed by patient to OCR
  - Pt Advocate/Interpreter office
- Early 1980s – OCR complaint
  - Dedicated Interpreters

# Difficult Challenges

- Budget Crisis
  - Cuts in services (did not generate revenue)
  - Testimony from patients & providers
  - Services restored

Health Commission and Board of Supervisors – stopped the cuts



# Other challenges leading to changes

- 15 FTE > 70,000 language requests/year
- Additional “contract” interpreters used
- MOU issue
- Grievance filed by the union
- Resulted in more permanent staff
  - From 15 FTE to 22FTE = 8 as needed staff



# Current Interpreter Staffing

- 22 FTE to 27 FTE (Oct 2007)
- 7 days a week – 8 AM to 12 midnight
- On-site interpreters provide language assistance in over 15 languages & dialects
- As-needed interpreters available who provide additional languages
- Supplemental help from a telephonic agency and ASL agency

# Recruiting Interpreters

- Healthcare Interpreter Training program at CCSF
  - One year program - didactic & internship
- Offer to be an intern site for CCSF
  - Interpreter students can apply when positions are available
  - Good sense of who will work well in Unit

# Retaining Interpreters

- Ongoing training
- Encourage continuing education classes
- Show staff how productive they are
- Tell staff the “good stuff” patients & providers say
- Give staff frequent opportunities to share their experiences & ideas
- Keep staff involved in improvement projects-input
- New ideas and technology  $\Rightarrow$  proud staff

# Need to Improve Services

- **Timely** interpreter services
  - Decrease wait times for both providers and LEP patients
- To **eliminate** the practice of by-passing LEP patients in queue –language access timeliness ▲ equal rights
- To **increase** the efficiency of existing interpreter by eliminating the engaged waiting time–walk to clinic, wait for provider

# Grant Support to Improve Language Access

- The California Endowment
- Implement Videoconferencing Medical Interpretation (VMI)
- Partnership with ACMC
  - Sharing of smaller languages

# What is VMI

- Interpretation that takes place using a monitor or computer with an integrated camera and audio system
  - Interpreter sits in front of Video machine
  - Provider & patient in clinic
- patient and provider ↔ interpreter
- real-time visual & audio representation

# Mobile VMI Units



- Video units mounted on stable mobile carts
- Number of mobile units to a clinic area can vary depending on interpretation needs (1 to 4 units)



# Interpreter Call Center VMI Stations



- VMI stations are located in the interpreter services unit
- Currently there are 10 interpreter stations at SFGH
- SFGH created a VMI call center

# VMI Implementation

## Current

- Primary Clinics
- Medical Specialty Clinics
- AIDS/HIV clinic
- Hematology/Oncology
- Urgent Care
- Dermatology
- GI Clinic

## Future

- Chemo Infusion
- Women's Clinic
- Pedi Clinic
- Surgical Specialties
- ED
- In Patient Units
- 10 Community Clinics

# VMI in the News



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# Successes of VMI & Telephone Enhancement

- Increase number of patients served
- Improved timely language access for providers, patients
- Reduced engaged waiting time
- Improved our efficiency
  - "in person" = 38 minutes
  - VMI = 24 minutes
  - 37% increase in efficiency

# Leadership/Champion Support Sustaining the Service

- Executive leadership
  - CEO
  - Associate Administrator
  - CNO
  - Chief of Staff
- Champions – Medical & Nursing
- Accessible , timely, professional
  - Integrated into the culture –Mission Statement
  - Patients and providers expect the service

# Thank You

## Contact Information

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