

Alliance Medical Center (AMC)

Better Communication for Better Care

*Redwood Community Health Coalition
Promising Practice*

PROMISING PRACTICE OVERVIEW

Sometimes quality is not about numbers. While measuring health outcomes by determine the increase of exams or screenings can assume a healthier patient, if a patient does not feel heard or understood, or if the patient cannot understand the provider, that creates a risk of the patient not understanding the disease process or treatment plan.

At the same time, recruiting providers is challenging enough without requiring that they speak another language. Spanish-speaking staff at AMC were willing to interpret, but this took them away from their regular duties, and it still excluded a portion of AMC's patients who speak languages other than English and Spanish.

AIM

The aim of this project was to increase patient satisfaction and the quality of their care by being able to communicate with them in their own language, without needing interpreters on staff or long wait times for telephone interpreters.

MEASURES

Well over half of AMC's patients state they are best served in a language other than English. While the majority of these prefer to speak Spanish as their primary language, other patients speak Laotian, Punjabi, Farsi, Vietnamese, and other languages, including ASL.

ACTIONS TAKEN

In March 2018, AMC contracted with InDemand medical interpreting services to provide remote video interpreting services. The project was initially piloted by one provider using a single cart containing a touch screen video device that would connect via WiFi to InDemand. After approximately one month, during which workflows were established, and additional three carts were added, with two at AMC's Healdsburg location and two in Windsor.

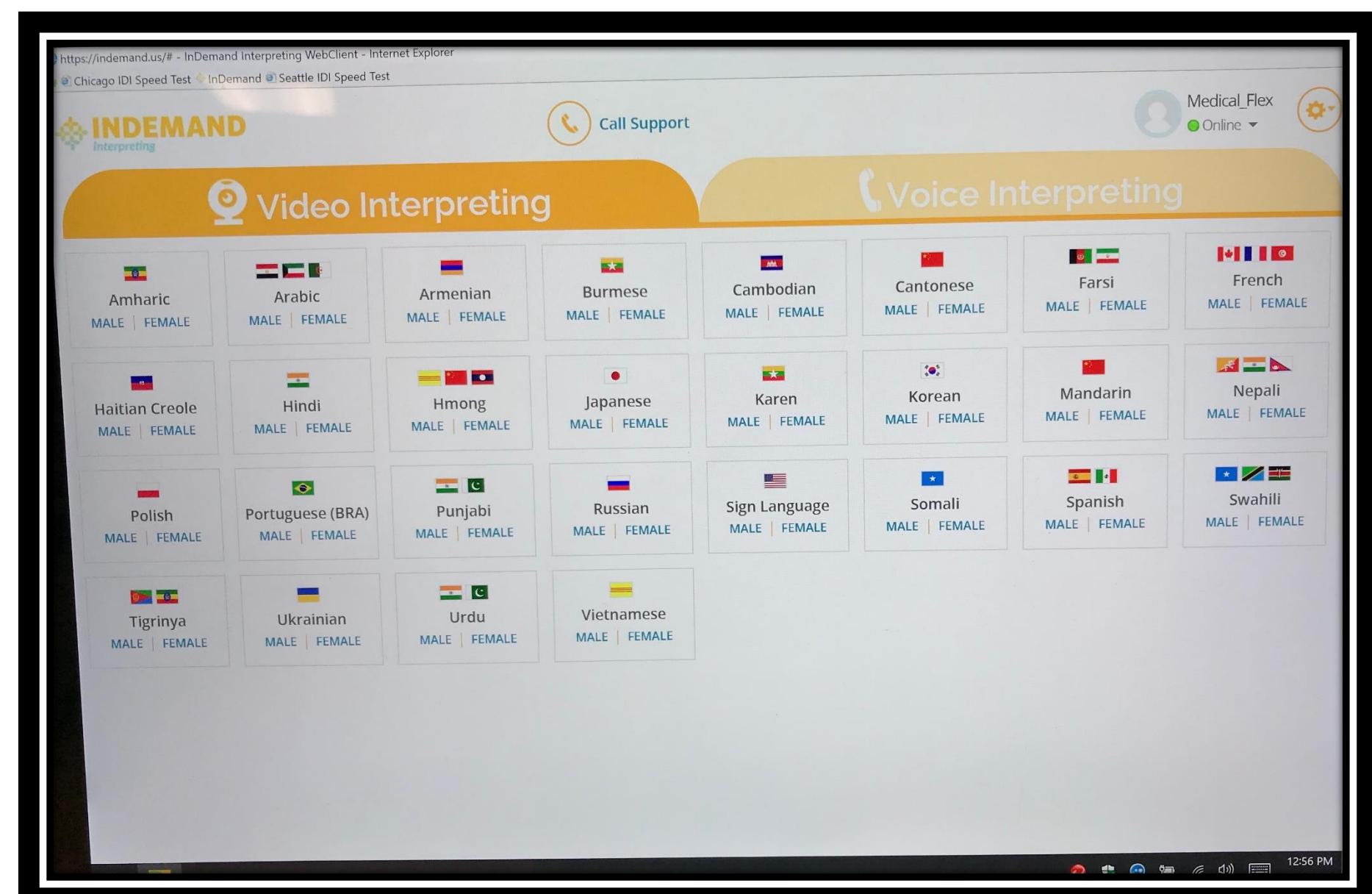
After approximately one month, the pilot proved so successful that six additional carts were purchased, providing five at each site.



WORKFLOW

When a patient requires interpreting services, the provider or the MA rolls the cart into the exam room and pushes a button on the touch screen to indicate the language for which interpretation is needed. Some patients have the need for an interpreter noted in their chart, which allows the MA to bring the cart in with them when rooming the patient.

In less than one minute, an interpreter connects and is visible on the screen and able to speak to the patient directly.



RESULTS TO DATE

AMC has provided over 11,438 minutes (an aggregate of nearly 24 business days) of interpretation services using InDemand since beginning in March. Since full roll-out, usage has gone from 422 minutes in July 2018, to 4,071 in November (almost 8.5 business days).

While the most common language interpreted has been Spanish, interpretation services for other languages such as Tigrinya, Somali, and Nepali have been used, with more than 60 minutes for each. Other languages used interpreted for 30 minutes (approximately 2 patient visits) have been Swahili, Farsi, Vietnamese, and Punjabi.

The system allows for a post-encounter rating by the patient, and has consistently scored between 4.5 and 5 (5-point scale), indicating high patient satisfaction with the service.

LESSONS LEARNED

An assessment of WiFi capacity for these devices should have been performed prior to full scale roll-out, as we discovered that AMC's Healdsburg building has several "dead spots" where internal WiFi is blocked by an external signal. This could have been rectified before full go-live for this service and system, since connectivity issues are the number one reason for a less-than-5 point score for by the patients for the service.

AMC is in process of upgrading its WiFi infrastructure to provide better connectivity.