

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4438

By Delegates Kimble and Young

[Introduced January 10, 2024; Referred
to the Committee on Health and Human Resources]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §33-24-7y, relating to requiring hospitals without an American Sign Language
 3 (ASL) interpreter on staff to provide technology to assist with communication for hearing or
 4 speech impaired patients and visitors.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 24. HOSPITAL SERVICE CORPORATIONS, MEDICAL SERVICE
 CORPORATIONS, DENTAL SERVICE CORPORATIONS AND HEALTH
 SERVICE CORPORATIONS.**

§33-24-7y. Required communication assistive technology for hearing and speech impaired.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that every hospital service corporation, medical service
 2 corporation, health service corporation and healthcare facility operating under this chapter, which
 3 receives federal funds such as Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP services, must provide free American
 4 Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services or communication assistance to patients and visitors
 5 with a hearing or speech impairment under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the
 6 Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

7 (b) Any hospital service corporation, medical service corporation, health service
 8 corporation and healthcare facility subject to this chapter that does not have an American Sign
 9 Language (ASL) interpreter on staff shall provide communication assistive technology at no cost to
 10 every patient or visitor with a hearing or speech impairment. This section is intended to provide all
 11 people with equal access to public healthcare services.

12 (c) Noncompliance with this section shall be reportable to licensing authorities.

13 (d) This section becomes effective upon passage.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require hospitals without an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter on staff to provide technology to assist with communication for hearing or speech impaired patients and visitors.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law,

and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.