

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

The purpose of language interpreters (oral) and translators (written) is to ensure effective communication between limited English proficient (LEP) patients and their health care providers. Utilizing interpreters in medical triads ensures that patient/provider communication is clear and accurate. It also increases access to preventive services, reduces the need for unnecessary procedures and fosters a better patient/provider relationship.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that recipients of federal funds (through Medi-Cal, Medicare, research dollars, etc.) ensure meaningful access to services for LEP patients. This requirement affects health agencies, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, managed care organizations, contractors and others. Interpretation services must be offered at no cost and providers should avoid using minors, family members, friends or untrained interpreters.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act is enforced by the Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights. The Region IX office can be contacted by calling 1-800-368-1019. Refer to their website www.hhs.gov/ocr for more information.

INTERPRETATION

As the State of California has no certification process for health care interpreters, it is important that both patient and provider learn how to identify quality language resources.

- Interpreting is a complex skill. Not all bilingual persons are qualified to be health care interpreters.
- A trained health care interpreter acquires interpreting skills through extensive training, practice and continuing education.
- Studies have shown that 23% to 53% of words are incorrectly interpreted when untrained interpreters are utilized.
- Learn about the basics of interpretation. This will help you assess the skills of an interpreter.
- Conduct adequate research. Meet with interpretation agencies to learn about recruitment, testing and training protocols.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT INTERPRETATION SERVICES

- What are your recruitment methods?
- What are the qualifications of your health care interpreters?
- What language proficiency assessment methods do you use? May I obtain a copy of your proficiency assessment tools?
- What training have your health care interpreters completed? May I obtain a copy of the curricula or training manual? May I audit a training session?
- Are health care interpreters required to participate in continuing education courses?
- Are your interpreters “certified”?
- What is the “certification” process?
- Do you offer a pre-session where I can meet with the interpreter before a session to clarify expectations?
- For more information on how to choose and use a language agency, refer to The California Endowment’s publication “How to Choose and Use a Language Agency: A Guide for Health and Social Service Providers Who Wish to Contract with Language Agencies,” at: www.calendow.org/pub/publications/HOWTOCHOOSEALANGUAGEAGENCY030703.pdf

UTILIZING AN INTERPRETER EFFECTIVELY

An interpreter facilitates understanding and communication between two people who do not speak the same language or come from the same culture. Two modes of interpreting that are commonly used in health care settings are consecutive and simultaneous interpreting.

In **simultaneous interpreting** the interpreter begins to interpret almost immediately after the speaker begins to speak.

In **consecutive interpreting** the interpreter waits for the speaker to complete a thought before interpreting. Remember to allot additional time when using an interpreter who interprets consecutively. This is the most common mode used in health care interpreting.

- When using an interpreter, speak in short sentences. Don't assume that the interpreter is a "language machine".
- When using an interpreter for a health care appointment, remember to speak directly to the LEP patient.
- A trained interpreter will speak in the first person voice while interpreting, using "I" statements instead of "he said" or "she said".
- A trained interpreter will not speak on behalf of the client.
- A trained interpreter will not answer questions on behalf of LEP patients.
- A trained interpreter will not make judgments or decisions for the LEP client.
- A trained interpreter will stop a session if clarification is needed. This is called an intervention.
- A trained interpreter will comply with the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreter's (CHIA) ethical principles, protocols, and guidance on roles and interventions. Refer to their website at www.chia.ws/standards.htm for more information.
- A trained interpreter is a member of the health care team and will keep all information confidential.

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION RESOURCES

2.1.1. of Los Angeles County211 or 800-339-6993

TTY 800-660-4026

www.211losangeles.org

Trained specialists are on duty 24 hours a day/7 days a week to provide information and referrals to community agencies that can help with translation and interpretation services.

California Relay Service (CRS)..... 800-735-0373
TTY users 800-735-2929
TDD/Voice..... 800-735-2922

www.ddtp.org

Provides specially-trained operators to relay telephone conversations back and forth between people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-disabled and all those they wish to communicate with by telephone.

California Telephone Access Program - Equipment..... 800-806-1191
Spanish Voice 800-949-5650
Cantonese Voice..... 866-324-8754
Mandarin Voice 866-324-8747
Hmong Voice.....866 880-3394
TTY English 800-806-4474
TTY Spanish 800-896-7670

www.ddtp.org

Distributes telecommunications equipment and services to individuals certified as having functional limitations of hearing, vision, mobility, speech and/or interpretation of information.

Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness, Inc..... 323-478-8000

2222 Laverna Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90041

www.gladinc.org

Ensures equal access for the deaf and hard of hearing community to the same opportunities afforded their hearing counterparts.

PALS for Health and ALAS para tu Salud

Provider call-in line 213-553-1818
Patient call-in line (API languages) 800-228-8886
Patient call-in line (Spanish)..... 213-627-4850

605 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 600, Los Angeles, CA 90015

www.palsforhealth.org

PALS for Health is a non-profit, community-based, language access and advocacy program which offers low-cost health care interpretation services in various Asian and Pacific Islander (API) languages. ALAS para tu Salud project provides similar services in Spanish. They require a minimum of 2-days notice on all interpreter requests and serve both Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Their interpreters and translators have to complete an intensive application process that includes a bilingual proficiency exam and 6-day training. They also offer written translation services, patient language rights education, cultural trainings for providers, language proficiency testing, and interpreter training for bilingual health care professionals.