

HERITAGE PROVIDER NETWORK



Language Assistance: Provider & Staff Responsibility

The following guide summarizes all regulatory agency requirements including:

Section 1557 Final Rules of Affordable Care Act;
Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964;
Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) contractual requirements;
Medi-Cal Managed Care Division (MMCD) Policy Letters;

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); and
National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

Provider Responsibilities - Important Regulatory Reminders

- ❖ **Inform and offer no-cost interpreting services to patients**
- ❖ **Interpreter Services Poster**
 - Post the “Free Interpretation Services including American Sign Language” sign at key points of contact. This sign informs patients who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), hard-of-hearing or deaf that free interpreter services are available to them.
- ❖ **Language Preference**
 - Document the patient’s preferred language preference in his/her medical record.
- ❖ **Request or Refusal of interpreter Services**
 - Discourage patients from using friends and family members as interpreters.
 - Do not use minors to interpret unless there is an emergency.
 - If a patient requests or refuses interpreter services after being informed of his or her right to free interpreter services – document the refusal in the patient’s medical record.
- ❖ **Bilingual Providers and Staff**
 - Providers and staff who communicate with patients in a language other than English or who act as interpreters must maintain appropriate qualifications on file, i.e. Certification of language proficiency or interpretation training.
- ❖ **Cultural and Language Related Complaints and Grievances**
 - Your patients have the right to file a complaint/grievance if they feel their cultural or language needs are not met in your office.

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Free Telephonic and Face-to-Face Interpreter Services

We provide over-the-phone, face-to-face and American Sign Language interpreter services for patients who are LEP, hard-of-hearing, or deaf. These services are free to you and your patients.

❖ Patients who are LEP

Applicable workflow for each Health Plan - *HPN Language Assistance Sheet*

- **Over the phone interpreter services:** These services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please see the *HPN Language Assistance Sheet*
- **Face-to-Face interpreter services:** Please see the *HPN Language Assistance Sheet*

**After-Hours Access: Answering machines should inform patients who are LEP about accessing interpreting services after-hours*

❖ Communication for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

- To communicate over the phone: You can place calls and receive calls from patients using the California Relay Service (CRS). It is a no-cost relay service provided by the Federal Communications Commission.
 - English: 1(800) 735-2922 or 1(800) 855-7100 or 711
 - Spanish: 1(800) 855-3000 or 1(800) 855-7200 or 711
- The CSR is free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When You Identify a Limited English Proficient Patient

- ✓ Offer interpreting services to a patient in a respectful manner when you notice:
 - ✓ Patient is quiet or does not respond to questions.
 - ✓ Patient simply says yes or no, or gives inappropriate or inconsistent answers to your questions.
 - ✓ Patient may have trouble communicating in English or you may have a very difficult time understanding what they are trying to communicate.
 - ✓ Patient self identifies as LEP by requesting language assistance.

How to Work Effectively with Interpreters

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Speaking to patients using interpreters is slightly different from speaking to patients directly. Here are useful tips to make your interpreted encounters go smoothly:

- ✓ Expect and allow more time for interpreted medical appointments.
- ✓ Talk directly to a patient.
- ✓ Speak in a normal voice, not too fast or too loud.
- ✓ Be brief and use plain language.
- ✓ Avoid acronyms, medical jargon, and technical terms.
- ✓ Pause after a short sentence for an interpreter to interpret.
- ✓ Do not say anything you do not want a patient to hear.

C&L Trainings

The following trainings are offered to our network providers and staff at no cost.

- ❖ **Cultural Competency and Disability & Sensitivity Training**

Cultural and Linguistic Contact

For more information or any questions about C&L services, please contact

The Quality Management Department via email: HDMG-QM-Dept@hdmg.net

Telephone: (661) 582-8573

Referrals to Culturally Appropriate Community Resources and Services

If a patient needs services from a community based organization or social service agency, please reference findhelp.org for local resources. Please document the referral in the patient's record.

Availability of Member Materials in Threshold Languages and Alternative Formats

Patients may request materials in their preferred language and in alternative formats. Alternative formats include Audio, Braille, and Large Print.

Cultural Competency Training

We encourage you and your staff to attend disability sensitivity and cultural awareness competency training programs. These trainings can enhance your interpersonal and intra-cultural skills, which can improve communication with your culturally diverse patients including seniors and People with Disabilities. Programs are available through the Office of Minority Health and other agencies.