

Solution: Cultural Competence in Health Care: Overcoming Language Barriers as a Strategy to Improve Safety and Quality

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IDENTIFICATION:

When one thinks of the six aims of quality from the Institute of Medicine *Crossing the Quality Chasm* report, equitable care has received the least attention. According to Dr. Nancy Krieger (Harvard School of Public Health), the traditional approach to health disparities issues has been, "No data, no problem." However, this no longer will be the case with the proposed Joint Commission accreditation standards on the provision of culturally competent patient-centered care and the National Quality Forum's proposed National Voluntary Consensus Standards for a Framework and Preferred Practices for Measuring and Reporting Cultural Competency.

As the U.S. population becomes increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, healthcare organizations have struggled to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS). By 2050, it is projected that minorities will constitute fifty percent of the population. Research studies have documented that language problems reduce the patient safety and healthcare quality of limited English proficient (LEP) patients. The lack of qualified, medical interpreters and inadequate funding are two major impediments to providing these services. In the past, healthcare providers have often resorted to drastic measures in order to provide language services. Untrained interpreters are more likely to commit interpretation errors that can lead to adverse clinical outcomes. Occasionally, a bilingual healthcare provider may be available; however, this is still a less than ideal circumstance. In the absence of any language services, care can be compromised or delayed. In other instances, the outcomes can be catastrophic.

PROCESS:

Presentation Objectives:

- Describe the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services for limited English proficient patients
 - a. Overview of U.S. demographics
 - b. Discussion of Federal mandates and regulations
- Identify how the lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services for limited English proficient patients can adversely impact patient safety and healthcare quality
 - a. Describe case studies demonstrating the hazards of using untrained interpreters and bilingual personnel, while establishing the importance of providing qualified, medical interpreters

- b. Two case scenarios, for which culturally and linguistically appropriate services were not provided, will be viewed on DVD--a 911 call from a Spanish-speaking caller and a Vietnamese-speaking patient's visit to the Emergency Department.
 - c. The presenter and the participants will engage in an interactive dialogue of the issues raised in the two case scenarios.
 - d. The two case scenarios, which were revised to incorporate culturally and linguistically appropriate services, will be viewed a second time.
 - e. The presenter and the participants will engage in an interactive dialogue about the differences between the previous and current scenarios and the potential impact on patient safety and healthcare quality.
- Discuss experiences, lessons learned, and success stories from The Johns Hopkins Health System and other organizations
 - a. Examples of policies, translated materials, use of universal symbols in healthcare, and other resources to assist participants in implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate services in their organizations

Teaching Methods:

- PowerPoint lecture with handouts
- case studies
- case scenarios on DVD (*Breaking Down the Language Barrier: Translating Limited English Proficiency into Practice*, Department of Justice)
- interactive dialogue between the presenter and the participants
- list of resources

SOLUTION:

Resources

National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)
<http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=15>

Limited English Proficiency: A Federal Interagency Website
<http://www.lep.gov/resources/resources.html>

Hablamos Juntos: Language Policy and Practice in Health Care
<http://www.hablamosjuntos.org/>

- Also see: *Universal Symbols in Health Care*
<http://www.hablamosjuntos.org/signage/symbols/default.symbols.asp>

Speaking Together: National Language Services Network
<http://www.speakingtogether.org/>

National Health Law Program: Language Access in Health Care Statement of Principles
<http://www.healthlaw.org/library/item.71365>



HRET Disparities Tool Kit: A tool kit for collecting race, ethnicity, and primary language from patients
<http://www.hretdisparities.org/>

Diversity Rx

<http://www.diversityrx.org/>

- Quality Healthcare for Culturally Diverse Populations Conference
<http://www.diversityrxconference.org/>

A Patient-Centered Guide to Implementing Language Access Services in Healthcare Organizations

<http://www.omhrc.gov/Assets/pdf/Checked/HC-LSIG.pdf>

Joint Commission: *Hospitals, Language, and Culture: A Snapshot of the Nation*

http://www.jointcommission.org/NR/rdonlyres/E64E5E89-5734-4D1D-BB4D-C4ACD4BF8BD3/0/hlc_paper.pdf

Joint Commission: *One Size Does Not Fit All: Meeting the Health Care Needs of Diverse Populations*

http://www.jointcommission.org/PatientSafety/HLC/one_size_meeting_need_of_diverse_populations.htm

Oral, Linguistic, and Culturally Competent Services: Guides for Managed Care Plans

<http://www.ahrq.gov/about/cods/cultcomp.htm>

Providing Oral Linguistic Services: A Guide for Managed Care Plans

<http://www.ahrq.gov/about/cods/oralling.htm>

White Paper: "For the Health Care CEO: Thinking about Language Access in Health Care" by Edward L. Martinez, MS

<http://www.pgsi.com/Products/Resources/WhitePapers/WhitePaper1.aspx>

National Quality Forum's proposed "Framework and Preferred Practices for Measuring and Reporting Cultural Competency"

<http://www.qualityforum.org/projects/ongoing/cultural-comp/>

To order the video, *Breaking Down the Language Barrier: Translating Limited English Proficiency into Practice*

- Contact the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division's Coordination and Review Section at (202) 307-2222 or crt.lep@usdoj.gov
- CDs and associated materials are available for free