

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SUBJECT: NON-ENGLISH AND LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

POLICY NO. 318

PURPOSE: To overcome language barriers and facilitate access to departmental programs and services for limited English proficiency (LEP) and non-English speaking patients.

POLICY: It is departmental policy to provide bilingual services to LEP and non-English speaking patients. The policy requires all departmental facilities and programs to have interpretation services readily available in languages spoken by more than 5% of the local service area population or the patient population being served. The following resources shall be available:

1) *Employees on Bilingual Bonus:*

These employees are certified as fluent in a foreign language and are currently in assignments meeting the requirements of County Code Section 6.10.140, including fluency in both English and at least one foreign language, and knowledge and sensitivity toward the culture and needs of the patient.

2) *In-House Interpreters:*

These employees volunteer to serve as interpreters for the facility on an as-needed basis.

3) *Language Line Service:*

The AT&T Language Line Service is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week to provide interpretation in every language. This service can be accessed by calling 1-800-752-0093.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2000

SUPERSEDES: June 1, 1995

APPROVED: _____

4) *Sign Language:*

Those patients who are deaf and whose primary language is sign language shall also have access to interpretation services.

Departments are responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of these interpretation services and resources. Each facility shall designate an administrator responsible for managing LEP and non-English speaking services. Any issues regarding LEP and non-English speaking resources shall be directed to this administrator.

LEP and non-English patients shall be offered an interpreter at the point of service or at any point requested during the provision of service. A patient may not be required or expected to use friends or family members as interpreters because the use of such individuals may result in breach of confidentiality and reluctance from the patient to reveal personal information critical to the services to be provided. A friend or a family member may be used only if requested or authorized by the patient. The use of friends or family members as interpreters is to be documented in the patient's medical record. Minors (18 years old and younger) may not be used as interpreters.

LEP and non-English speaking patients shall have their primary language written on their medical chart. The use and source of interpretation services shall be documented in the patient's chart.

The following ways shall be used to notify patients about the bilingual resources available:

1) *Posting:*

Departmental facilities and programs shall post multi-lingual notices informing patients of available bilingual services and how to access them. These notices shall also contain the telephone number where patients can file complaints about

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interpretation services. Each notice shall also include a T.D.D. number for the hearing impaired. Standard frequently used forms shall also be translated and made available to patients. Notices shall be posted in conspicuous areas around the facility, including, but not limited to the emergency room and major entrances, admitting areas and lobbies.

2) *Advising patient:*

Departmental employees shall verbally advise the patient of their right to interpretation services available at no cost.

3) *Request by patient:*

Interpretation services shall be readily available to patients upon request.

Programs and facilities shall annually assess the bilingual needs of their patient population and develop plans to ensure that identified needs are addressed.

DEFINITION

"Non-English or limited English proficient speaking persons" refers to persons whose primary language is a language other than English.

AUTHORITY

County Code Section 6.10.140
California Health and Safety Code Section 1259
Civil Rights Act of 1964
Government Code Section 7290-7299.8 (Dymally-Alattore Act)

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07/25/2000