

Proclaiming the Week of September 22-28 as Language Access Week in Los Angeles County

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' (DHS) Office of Language Access and Inclusion (OLAI) will be celebrating their Second Annual Language Access Week in September 2024. During this celebration, DHS staff and patients across sites learn more about language access, services available, and celebrate the invaluable contributions of language access staff, such as Healthcare Interpreters. The Office of Language Access and Inclusion (OLAI) provides strategic direction and leadership on language access across DHS sites and programs. OLAI works in parallel with these service delivery teams to guide the implementation of language access priorities and strategic goals, as well as to identify system-wide needs and improvement opportunities. OLAI provides access to over 250 languages, through certified bilingual staff, contracted language service vendors, and DHS Healthcare Interpreters to ensure quality language services at DHS are available in-person, via video, and telephonically. Language Services are also made available through innovative integration into our Virtual Healthcare platform including video visits, eVisits, and language services apps for smart devices as part of our Language Access in Virtual Healthcare Program (LAVHP).

Over the last year, through the direct support of the Los Angeles County Board of

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Supervisors, OLAI has made incredible strides towards strengthening language access and ultimately language justice for the communities we serve. For example, through OLAI's many available service lines, DHS reached a major milestone in 2023 – providing over 1 million qualified healthcare interpreter sessions for the year. The Board of Supervisors was instrumental in supporting OLAI in the creation of a Healthcare Interpreter (HCI) career ladder with two new classifications: the Senior Healthcare Interpreter and Language Services Supervisor. Establishing this HCI career ladder creates promotional opportunities, strengthening recruitment and retention efforts of our Language Access staff. Furthermore, the National Association of Counties (NACo) recognized OLAI with the 2024 Achievement Award for the Language Access in Virtual Healthcare Program (LAVHP), which has increased qualified healthcare interpreter sessions every year since implementation.

Language Services are available throughout DHS Hospitals, Correctional Health Services, Ambulatory Care Network, and health programs. OLAI serves as the trusted communication bridge between the health system and our communities so that together we realize meaningfully engaged care. OLAI's work is valuable and vital to ending healthcare barriers and improving patient health outcomes.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim September 22 through September 28, as the second annual Language Access Week, throughout Los Angeles County, and instruct the Department of Health Services to continue to recognize the commitment of Healthcare Interpreter staff to language justice and advancing the health of our patients and communities, by providing extraordinary service in the patient's preferred language.

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