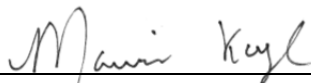


Effective Date: March 15, 2016	Number: ADMN 115	Page 1 of 3
Approved By: 	Title: Marni Kuyl, RN, MS Director	

Communication with Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

POLICY

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is committed to ensuring that information is communicated in ways that are sensitive to the needs and requirements of clients from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

HHS programs and staff will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits.

All interpreters, translators and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided without cost to the person being served, and everyone will be informed of the availability of such assistance.

HHS will conduct a regular review of the language access needs of our population, as well as update and monitor the implementation of this policy and these procedures, as necessary.

PURPOSE

To ensure meaningful communication with LEP residents or clients and their authorized representatives involving programs, services, critical information about regulations, requirements, or procedure. In addition, this policy is meant to ensure those seeking referrals for or receiving clinical care have access to information in their preferred language to increase their understanding of their conditions and treatment options. The policy also provides for communication of information contained in vital documents, including but not limited to, waivers of rights, consent to treatment forms, referral forms, financial and insurance benefit forms, and explanations of regulatory requirements or ordinances.

Language assistance will be provided through use of competent bilingual staff, staff interpreters, contracts, or formal arrangements with local organizations providing interpretation or translation services, or technology and telephonic interpretation services. All staff will be provided notice of this policy and procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with LEP individuals will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter.

PROCEDURES

1. Identifying LEP persons and their language:

- a. *HHS program staff* will promptly identify the language and communication needs of the LEP person. If necessary, staff may use a language identification card (or “I speak cards,” available online at www.lep.gov). In addition, when records are kept of past interactions with clients, residents or family members, the language used to communicate with the LEP person will be included as part of the record.
- b. Some LEP persons may prefer or request to use a family member or friend as an interpreter. However, family members or friends of the LEP person will not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by that individual and **after** the LEP person has understood that an offer of an interpreter at no charge to the person has been made. The offer and the response will be documented in the person’s file as applicable. If the LEP person chooses to use a family member or friend as an interpreter, issues of competency of interpretation, confidentiality, privacy, and conflict of interest must be considered. If the family member or friend is not competent or appropriate for any of these reasons, competent interpreter services will be provided to the LEP person.
- c. Children or other clients will **not** be used to interpret, in order to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication.

2. Obtaining a qualified interpreter:

HHS Administrative Services is responsible for:

- a. Obtaining from program managers, maintaining and distributing an accurate and current list showing the name, language, phone number and hours of availability of bilingual staff.
- b. Ensuring contracts with outside interpreter(s) and translation services are current for use when bilingual staff or staff interpreter is not available or does not speak the needed language. Update and distribute a list of agencies with approved contracts that provide interpretation and translation. Include the agency contact information or any special instructions as necessary.

3. Providing written translations:

- a. Documents that meet the purpose of this policy shall be translated into languages appropriate to the intended audience.
- b. When translation of vital documents is needed, HHS program staff may work directly with their bilingual staff, other HHS program bilingual staff after contacting the appropriate supervisor or an approved agency with a current contract.
- c. Original documents being submitted for translation will be in final, approved form with updated and accurate legal and medical information.

4. Providing notice to LEP persons:

HHS staff will inform LEP persons of the availability of language assistance, free of charge, by providing written notice in languages LEP persons will understand. At a minimum, notices and signs will be posted and provided in intake areas and other points of entry, Notification will also be provided through one or more of the following: outreach documents, telephone voice mail menus, local newspapers, radio and television stations, and/or community-based organizations.

5. Monitoring language needs and implementation:

On an ongoing basis, HHS program staff will assess changes in demographics, types of services or other needs that may require reevaluation of this policy and its procedures. In addition, HHS program staff will regularly assess the efficacy of these procedures, including but not limited to mechanisms for securing interpreter services, equipment used for the delivery of language assistance, complaints filed by LEP persons, feedback from patients and community organizations, etc.

6. Program staff must instruct the interpreter to inform clients of the following:

- a. All materials requiring signature and/or consent must be fully explained to the client.
- b. A client must be informed of his/her rights and the department's grievance procedure at the time of intake.
- c. A client must be informed of other services available within the service system.

7. The program supervisor is responsible to review the submitted interpreter bill to ensure the signature of the interpreter and the charges for the date and hours worked are correct.

ORIGINATED: 01/10
Review Dates: 12/12, 3/16
Next Review Date: 12/20