

525 Clinton Street
Bow, NH 03304
Voice: 603-228-2830
Fax: 603-228-2464



61 Elm Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Voice: 802-229-0002
Fax: 802-223-2336

Language Assistance with Limited English Proficient (LEP) Patients

Overview

- All staff should be trained on the use of the language line
- Use *Determination of Need for an Interpreter* with each new potentially LEP patient. This can be done over the phone with a patient or in person.
- Note language preference in E H R
- If patient is determined LEP prior to the appointment
 - a. Patient will be scheduled with a qualified Spanish speaking provider or
 - b. A qualified volunteer interpreter will be arranged or
 - c. The use of the language line will be noted in EHR
- If patient is determined LEP at the appointment, the language line will be used as described in the *Language Access Policy*.
- An in-person or language line interpreter should be used when actively working with a patient at all points of contact.
- The language line should be contacted at the beginning of each separate encounter with the patient and disconnected in between. For example, the language line will be called when the nurse enters the room and the call will finish when the nurse completes the patient encounter. The language line will be used again when the doctor enters.

Language Access Policy with Limited English Proficient (LEP) Patients

Standard: _____ shall demonstrate evidence of culturally and linguistically accessible services

- A. Identifying and assessing the language needs of LEP patients
- B. Provision of a range of oral language assistance options
- C. Notice of right to free language assistance
- D. Periodic training of staff
- E. Monitoring of language assistance program
- F. Translation of written materials

A. Identifying and assessing language needs of LEP patients

1. Language needs of LEP populations that are eligible for health center services are assessed annually
2. Registration form asks patient to identify preferred language
3. Patients who have identified a language other than English as their preferred language on registration form
4. *Determination of Need for an Interpreter* is used with each new potentially LEP patient. This can be done over the phone with a patient or in person.
5. Language assistance needs are tracked through E H R

B. Provision of a range of oral language assistance options

1. Language assistance is used at all points of contact with LEP patients in a timely

manner during all hours of operation

2. If patient is determined LEP prior to the appointment:
 - Patient is scheduled with a qualified Spanish speaking provider¹ **or**
 - A qualified volunteer interpreter¹ is arranged **or**
 - The use of the language line is noted in E H R
3. If patient is determined LEP at the appointment, the language line is used
4. An in-person or language line interpreter is used when actively working with a patient at all points of contact.
 - Front desk staff can receive calls in language other than English
 - Front desk staff access language line if patient has questions about forms
 - Billing staff utilize language line to contact LEP patients
 - Follow up phone calls with lab results or medication instructions are done via language line
5. The language line is contacted at the beginning of each separate encounter with the patient and disconnected in between.
6. Family and friends are not used to provide interpretation services

C. Posted notices

1. Notice of right to free language assistance is posted in the waiting room and exam rooms in most commonly spoken languages
2. Language identification poster is located in waiting room
3. Signage of clinic hours is in most commonly spoken languages

D. Periodic training of staff

1. All staff are trained once a year on *Language Access Policy*, how to work effectively with in-person and telephone interpreters, and cultural awareness
2. All new hires are trained on *Language Access Policy* within new hire training

E. Translation of written materials

1. Providers will use the language option in the E.H.R to ensure that LEP patients Receive any relevant educational materials in the preferred language.
2. Vital documents are translated in commonly encountered languages other than English by a qualified¹ translator
 - a. Registration forms
 - b. Health history
 - c. Consent forms
 - d. Financial assistance forms
 - e. Information on available services
3. When possible and appropriate other clinic documents are translated in commonly encountered languages

G. Monitoring of language assistance program

1. Patient satisfaction surveys around language access with LEP patients are completed yearly
2. Staff is surveyed yearly to identify use of language assistance and potential gaps
3. The *Language Access Policy* is reviewed and updated yearly

Providing Health Care to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Patients Latino Migrant Farmworkers

Recommendations to Consider at Various Points of Contact with the Clinic

Waiting room:

- Clinic hours posted in Spanish
- Signage about right to free language assistance in Spanish
- Language identification poster (for clinics that see a range of LEP patients)

Front Desk:

- Adapt clinic policy on new patients to allow access for acute care needs from non-patients
- Do not require Social Security Number
- Recognize that the majority of patients are not eligible for state health insurance and as such should be offered sliding fee application
- Language assistance should be used to schedule appointments over the phone as well as to schedule follow-up appointments in person.
- Appointment reminders: identify best way to address language barrier
- Use registration forms in Spanish but understand that anything written in Spanish will be difficult to decipher without help of bilingual staff. Identify best way to address any questions with language assistance

Billing:

- Accept alternative forms of income documentation (such as a letter from employer)
- Sliding fee form letter notification of whether patient has qualified and at what amount should be in Spanish.
- Billing staff should be trained to use the language line

- The majority of Latino migrant farmworkers do not have access to credit cards or checks
 - Whenever possible, provide option for payment at time of visit
 - Be willing to accept money orders as payment method

Exam room

- Language assistance should be used with all health care providers who are actively working with the patient. For example, the language line can be called with the nurse and then again with doctor
- If at the dentist – language line should be used at the beginning of the appointment to explain the procedure and answer any questions as well as at the end of appointment to ensure clarity of what transpired during the visit as well as important follow-up information

Follow up:

- Calling patient with results of tests done at clinic should be done via language line

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