

Checklist to Facilitate the Development of Linguistic Competence within Primary Health Care Organizations

Health care organizations have been slow to develop and implement policies and structures to guide the provision of interpretation and translation services. In the absence of policies, structures and fiscal resources, the burden of such services remain at the practitioner and consumer level. The following checklist is designed to assist primary health care organizations in developing policies, structures, practices and procedures that support linguistic competence.

Does the primary health care organization or program have:

<input type="checkbox"/>	A mission statement that articulates its principles, rationale, and values for providing linguistically and culturally competent health care services?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and procedures that support staff recruitment, hiring, and retention to achieve the goal of a diverse and linguistically competent staff?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Position description and personnel/performance measures that include skill sets related to linguistic competence?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and resources to support ongoing professional development and in service training (at all levels) related to linguistic competence?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies, procedures and fiscal planning to insure the provision of translation and interpretation services?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and procedures regarding the translation of patient consent forms, educational materials, and other information in formats that meet the literacy needs of patients?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and procedures to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of interpretation and translation services?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and procedures to periodically evaluate consumer and personnel satisfaction with interpretation and translation services that are provided?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and resources that support community outreach initiatives to persons with limited English proficiency?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and procedures to periodically review the current and emergent demographic trends for the geographic area served in order to determine interpretation and translation services?

Definitions: The terms interpretation and translation are often used interchangeably. The National Center for Cultural Competence makes a distinction between the two terms and has provided the following definitions. Translation typically refers to the written conversion of written materials from one language to another. Interpretation is the oral restating in one language of what has been said in another language.

Source: "Linguistic Competence In Primary Health Care Delivery Systems: Implications for Policy Makers," January 2001: Policy Brief 2. National Center for Cultural Competence. Closing the Gap, February/March 2001.