Effective Interpreter Use
Interpreter Use Training

**Goals:**

- Improved health care delivery to low proficiency English (LEP) patients and families
- Improved provider satisfaction and fulfillment
Agenda

- Mandates for interpreter use
- Research supporting use
- Explore interpreter use skills - Video
- Discuss interpreter service at CPMC
- Discuss options for decreasing language barriers
- And, what you can do…
Magnitude of need: census data

- >28 million Americans are foreign born
- 44 million Americans speak a language other than English at home
- Over 300 languages spoken
- Not only urban, many immigrants now live in suburban and rural areas throughout the country.

These demographics have changed and are continuing to change rapidly. These numbers are strikingly different from 1970 census data when…
Because of the increasing diversity of the country, we are increasingly under mandate from such influential organizations as the AMA, AAP, STFM, and Liaison Committee on Medical Education to increase our medical training on all levels and to improve our delivery of care to diverse peoples.
CLAS: National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care

- “Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) to [diverse patients/consumers] has the potential to improve access to care, quality of care, and, ultimately, health outcomes.”
- Standards focus on access to care in the patient’s language.
  – Department of Health and Human Services
  December 2000

There are 14 Standards: There are broken down into mandates, guidelines and recommendations. The 4 mandates all deal with access to care in the patients’ language.
Laws Pertaining to the Provision of Interpreter Services

- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964)**

  1. No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

  2. In the Wall Street Journal article you were given, you may have read about the controversy over whether or not the federal government should mandate professional interpreter use in the health care setting under the Civil rights act. I am not going to go into the specifics of that, as I think the article does a good job of presenting the pros and cons.

- **New York State Public Health Law 405.7**

  The law states that if as little as 1% of a population speaks a language, language services must be available to that population. Language services must be available within 10 minutes in an emergency room and within 20 minutes for other clinical encounters.

  **Again, problems similar to federal law: funding and enforcement.**
Data

- Well documented negative impact of language barriers on:
  - Utilization
  - Satisfaction
  - ± Adherence

The data is relatively spare because the need is of fairly recent origin.

For interpreter services, there is a good deal of research documents negative impact of language barriers on
- utilization
  - fewer physician visits
  - reduced receipt of preventative services
- decreased satisfaction
  - possibly adherence

--even after controlling for such factors as literacy, health status, health insurance, regular source of care, and economic indicators.
Cost

- Prolonged length of stay in ER and higher diagnostic costs
  - L. Hampers, et al.
- Increased probability of hospital admission
  - M. Waxman et al.
- 3-fold increase in CT scans done for abdominal pain in LEP cohort in which 100% had interpreters, but 80% were “ad hoc” or untrained interpreters.
  - M. Waxman et al.

Financial: Lou Hampers a pediatrician in at Children’s Memorial in Chicago, did a prospective study documenting prolonged length of stay and higher diagnostic costs when a language barrier existed between provider and patient. Another prospective study documented increased probability of hospital admission. Also recently a study documented 3 fold increase in CT scans done for abdominal pain in a group in which 100% used interpreters, but 80% were “ad-hoc”, or untrained interpreters.


Video:
Communicating Effectively Through An Interpreter
Interpreter Services at New York Presbyterian Hospital

- Interpreter Services at NY Presbyterian Hospital: (212) 305-9607
  - Service provides Sign Language, Spanish, and French interpreters in person and by phone.

- Pacific Interpreters
  - Professional interpreters, over 100 languages.
  - Phone number and access code printed on cards available all over the medical center. Simply identify yourself and give the site-specific access code.

1. Volunteer Interpreter Services
   1. Receive training. May be medical students, retired persons, varied walks of life, and varied experience levels
   2. To request an interpreter best to give some notice in advance. However, whenever I have been in their office, they have an interpreter waiting to be used.

3. Pacific Interpreters: look for interpreter access technology in many of the ACN practice sites and pediatric ER. You can request this and advocate for it’s provision.

4. Show the headsets.
Overcoming Language Barriers, Options:

- On-site professional interpreters
- Remote telephone interpretation
- Increase language skills of students and residents
- Train staff as interpreters
- ESL for patients/families

1. Ad Hoc interpreters
   1. Range from medical staff, to other staff (custodial), to people in waiting room, to family members, (including children), and friends.
   2. One observational study, analysis of recorded ad hoc interpreters demonstrated that 23%-52% of words were incorrectly interpreted.
      1. Cons of using family, friends, and strangers are obvious.
         1. Cons of using staff – apparent in the video.
            1. Untrained, uncompensated, with a bias, difficult to access on a busy day – could take over the encounter – discuss Sheryl’s experience
            2. Would help to train them, and them compensate them (some figures in the literature ~ $1,500 per year)

3. On-site professional –
   1. we have this for sign language
   2. $ for off sites

3. Remote Telephone Interpretation –