

# Effective Use of Interpreters Improving Communication, Assessment and Outcomes

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# Non-English Speaking U.S. Population

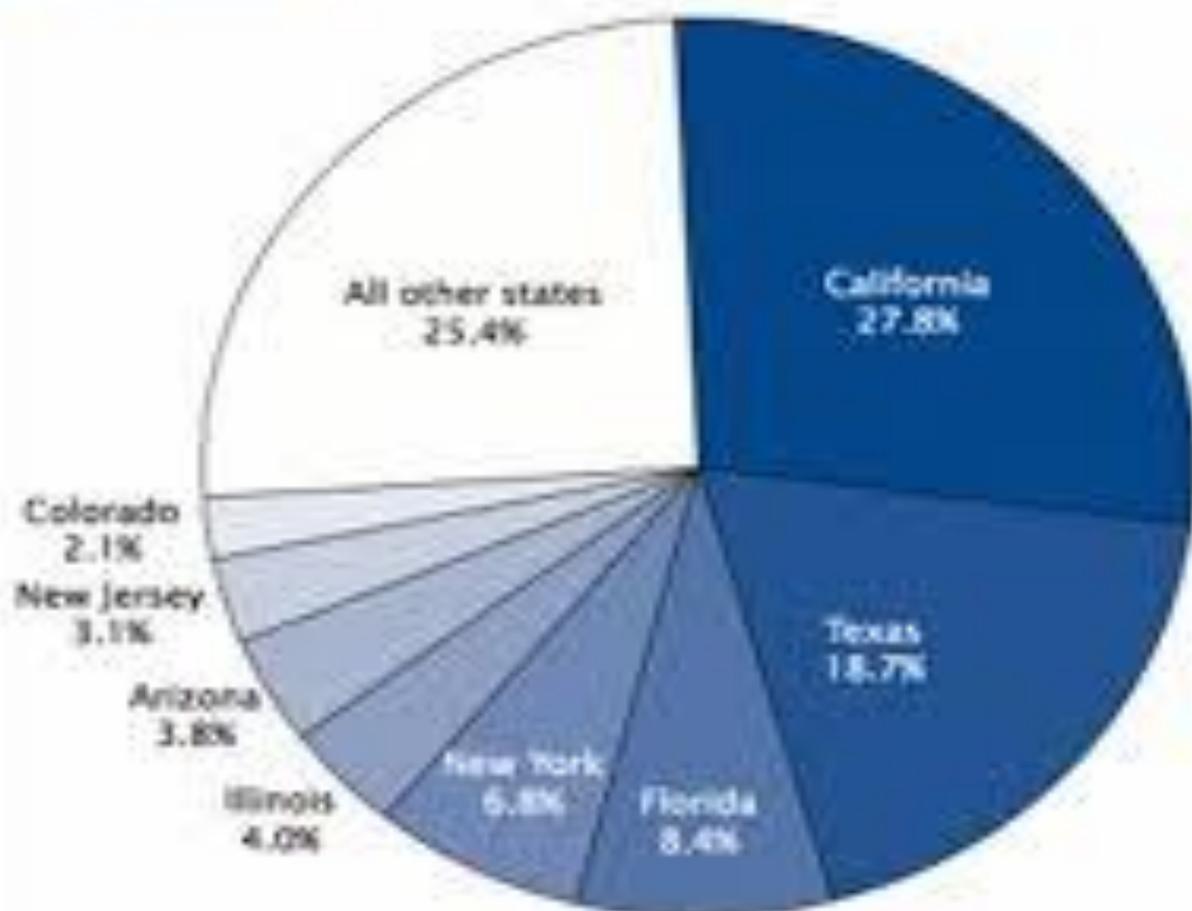
- The number of people five (5) and older who spoke a language other than English at home has more than doubled in the last three (3) decades
- Between 1980-2007 the percentage of non-English language grew by 140%
- In 2007: 55.4 million individuals reported speaking a language other than English at home
- Spanish speakers account for the largest numeric increase at 23.4 million in 2007
- Overall, the US Census report that there are more than 300 languages other than English spoken at home (US Census, 2010)

US Hispanic Population and Projections 1950-2050  
(000) Millions



Source: Synovate, U.S. Census Bureau

## Percent Distribution of the Hispanic Population by State: 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1.

Figure 1

**Top 10 Metropolitan Areas by Hispanic Population, 2010**

*(in millions)*



Notes: The metropolitan areas shown are the 10 largest by Hispanic population. In following graphs, metropolitan areas are abbreviated.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2010 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

- “ 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” (Perkins, 1998)
- “The US Department of Health and Human Services has long recognized that Title IV requires linguistic accessibility to health care” (p.6)
- “Office for Civil Rights has consistently interpreted Title VI to require the provision of qualified interpreter services and translated materials at no cost to patients” (p.6)

# Title VI of The Civil Rights Act US Department of Justice Video

- [Title VI of The Civil Rights Act US Department of Justice ...](#)

# Executive Order 13166

- Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." The Executive Order requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them.

# National Association of Social Workers

## Code of Ethics

- **Responsibilities to Clients:** understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures
- **Cultural Competence** is a set of behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations
- **Responsibility to Broader Society:** expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for the disadvantaged, oppressed and exploited people and groups: Promote conditions that encourage respect for culture and diversity (NASW, 2001)

# Importance of Communication and Limited English Speaking Population (LEP)

- “It is well established that language barriers contribute to health disparities in Limited English Speaking (LEP) patients” (Karliner et al, 2006)

# Importance of Communication and Limited English Speaking Population (LEP)

- Difficulty understanding presenting problem and symptoms
- Influence ability to obtain informed consent
- The use of more diagnostic resources and invasive procedures
- Decreased medical compliance
- Likely to experience medication problems
- Poorer adherence to treatment and follow-up visits

# Importance of Communication and LEP

- Decreased understanding of diagnosis and treatment
- Inability to participate in the “process” of care
- Increased inpatient length of stay
- Increased readmission rates
- Increased Cesarean Section Rates
- More likely to leave hospital AMA
- Decreased satisfaction with care

# Definition

## Translation vs Interpretation

- **Translation** refers to the conversion of written text into a corresponding written text in a different language (Spanish to English)
- **Translator** refers to the person who translates written text; especially one who does so professionally
- **Interpreter** refers to a person who renders a message spoken or signed in one language into a 2<sup>nd</sup> language
- **Professional Interpreter:** those trained professionals who abide by a professional code of ethics

# Terminology

## **Qualified Interpreter:**

A person who has been assessed for professional skills, demonstrated a high level of proficiency in at least two (2) languages and has the appropriate training/experience to interpret with skill and accuracy while adhering to the National Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice published by the National Council on Interpreting in Health care (The Terminology of Health Care Interpreting, 2008)

# Terminology

## **First Person Interpreting**

The interpreter as “the voice” of the client who interprets utterances of each speaker. For example, if the client says “my stomach hurts” the interpreter says (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> language) “my stomach hurts” and NOT “she says her stomach hurts”

## **Face to Face Interpreting**

Interpreting in which the interpreter is present in person with both or at least one of the persons for whom interpreting is provided

# Terminology

## Remote Interpreting

The interpreter is outside of the room of the encounter\*

## Telephone Interpreting

Carried out remotely with interpreter connected by phone to the principal parties: typically provided through a speaker phone or headset

(The Terminology of Health Care Interpreting, 2008)

## Source Language

The language of the speaker who is being translated (client)

## Target Language

The language of the person receiving interpretation (practitioner's language):  
The language into which an interpreter is interpreting at any given time (The Terminology of Health Care Interpreting, 2008)

# Terminology

## Transparency

The principal that everything that is said by any party in an interpreted conversation should be rendered in the other language, so that everything said can be heard and understood by everyone present.

- Whenever the interpreter has reason to enter into a conversation by speaking directly to either party in either language, the interpreter must subsequently interpret both his/her own speech and that of the party spoken to for the benefit of those present who do not understand the language used (The Terminology of Health Care Interpreting, 2008)

# Types of Interpretation

## **Summarizing**

Limited interpretation that excludes all or most details focusing only on the principal points of the interpreted speech: Not a full translation

## **Ad Hoc Interpreting**

An untrained individual who asserts proficiency in the relevant language pair, who is called upon or volunteers to interpret. Also called a lay interpreter

## **Simultaneous Interpreting**

The interpreter interprets at the same time as he/she is hearing the original speech

## **Consecutive Interpreting\***

More commonly used, where the interpreting is provided once the speaker has finished speaking, requiring the speakers to pause periodically for the interpreter

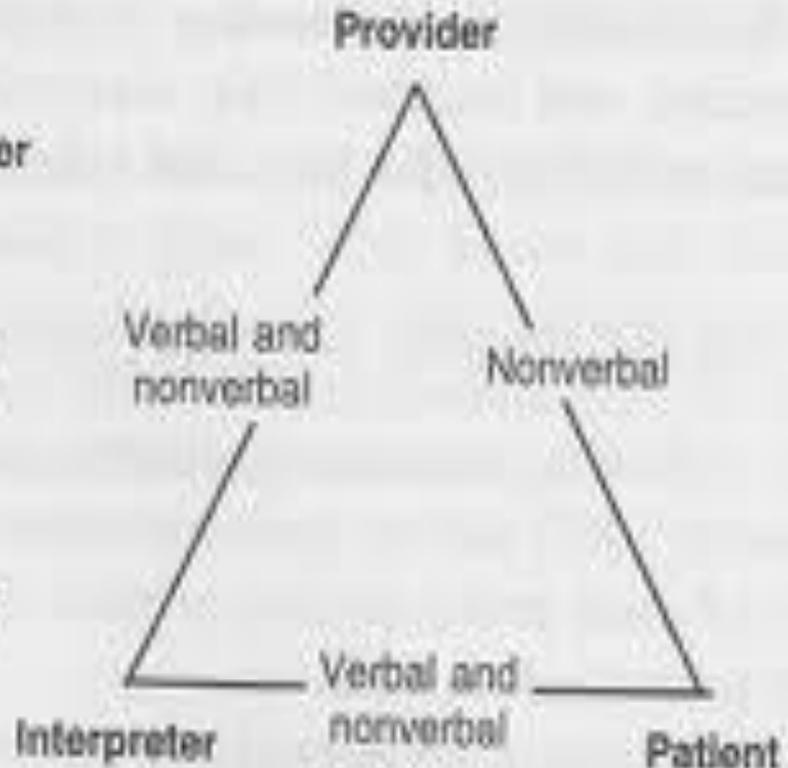
(The Terminology of Health Care Interpreting, 2008),  
Leng, Changrani, Hon0lseng & Gany, 2010)

# Working with Interpreters Positioning

Provider ↔ Interpreter

Provider ↔ Patient

Interpreter ↔ Patient



# Interviewing with Interpreters

- Use first person speech
- Speak directly to client not interpreter
- Speak in short phrases
- Ask one question at a time
- Avoid jargon
- Pause frequently to allow interpretation
- Avoid interrupting client
- Avoid, as much as possible, turning privately to the interpreter
- Give a calm and relaxed impression
- Use active listening skills
- Create a comfortable atmosphere where clients feel able to ask questions  
(Hadziabdie et al, 2013, Kaur, Oakley, Venn, 2014, Refugee Health: Best Practices, 2014)
- Check clients understanding by asking them to repeat back what they understand
- Do not allow the interpreter and client to end up in a discussion with each other\*

# Spanish Interpretation: What Can Go Wrong

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlpqcSTvXBo>
- Will need to end right after session. Viddy wants you to purchase another video

# Accurate Medical Interpretation

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= YR-TXflhTA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YR-TXflhTA)
- Example of Spanish interpretation 9 minutes
- Not too bad

# Spanish Interpretation: Mental Health Setting

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rRquvIBXxQ>

# Interpretation: Strengthening Social Work, Service and Service Provision

- Professional interpretation considered as the link to empowerment, self determination and dignity and worth of a person.
- It offers a patient/client the ability to be an active participant in the session
- Offers the patient/client a mechanism from which to taken seriously and to be “heard”
- Professional interpretation offers the patient/client information needed to critically think about services needed, diagnosis, and treatment options toward an improved quality of life
- This leads to the ability of LEP adults to make informed decisions about health, health care and treatment

# Interpretation: Strengthening Social Work and Service Provision

- “Improved communication with patients/clients can help educate practitioners gain a better understanding of a patient/client overall needs
  - Allergies to medication
  - Medication history
  - Intimate partner violence
  - Drug and alcohol abuse”
- “Interpretation at admission is important as it has the greatest impact.. Since patients/clients history accounts for 70% of the necessary information to formulate a correct diagnosis” (Lindholm, 2012)
- “If the discharge plan is clear to the patient/client they will be more likely to comply with treatment regimen...” (Bagchi, 2010)

# SW Partnership with Interpreters

- Acknowledgement of interpreter as a professional and colleague whose neutrality and integrity are supported (Hadziabdie, 2013)
- Recognition that both practitioner and interpreter are working together towards the common goal of providing competent, linguistically accurate interpretation
- Professional Interpreters, like social workers, are committed to providing high quality services to assist clients
- In some cases, interpreters can advocate for clients/families across the continuum of care (AHRQ, 2006)

# SW Partnership with Interpreters

- Professional interpreters are essential to promoting ongoing relationships with clients/families
- Act as a liaison between clients/families and social worker, agency and caregivers
- Professional interpreters can serve as case managers and cultural liaison (AHRQ, 2006)
- Address compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 13166, and NASW Code of Ethics

# Working with Interpreters

## Pre and Post Client Contact

- Introduce yourself to interpreter
- Acknowledge interpreter as a professional in communication and as a colleague in the interaction
- Distinguish role of practitioner and interpreter during meeting with client
- Address mode of interpretation (consecutive)
- Use of “probes” to keep interview/session on track
- Be clear about the nature of the interview and any concerns to be addressed with clients regarding their presenting problem/clients condition
- Address any cultural concerns that may be relevant to clients presenting problem
- Engage in conversation with professional interpreter about any issues that may surface (intense, emotional) and comfort level (Huddleson, 2013)

# Pre-Interview Contact

- Address/ reiterate issues of confidentiality, boundaries, transference/counter transference etc.
- Discuss whether interpreter has a dual relationship with client/culture in community
- Address whether any technical terminology will be used in session and discuss ways to translate into linguistically appropriate manner\*
- Address the issue of interpreter note taking

# Pre-Interview Contact

- Review of assessment tool also provides the interpreter with the opportunity to preempt places where clients may experience difficulty understanding themes
- This offers the interpreter the opportunity to review for words/terms that will require further clarification/explanation
- At this juncture, interpreter/practitioner can work together about how to address these themes to ensure clients complete comprehension
- This may also prevents interpreter from use of a dictionary during the session (Kaur, Oakley, Venn, 2014, Refugee Health: Best Practices, 2013, Rubin & Babbie, 2013, Hadziabdie, 2013)
- Offer details as to the date, location and duration of meeting with client

# Pre-Interview Contact

- Demonstrate your normal rate of speech to determine speed (fast/slow) and volume of speech (quiet/loud)
- Address the issue of appropriate attire
- Discuss how interpreter will explain the process of interview to client
- This includes: seating arrangement, mode of translation, use of dictionary or note taking
- Approximate length of interview

# Assessment

- Bagchi (2010) states...  
“use of professional interpreters can lead to more accurate assessment... which can be reflected in a more accurate triage and a shorter wait for appropriate treatment”  
(p.7)
- “Interpreters can also provide additional information on body gestures and other non-verbal communication that can assist with patient/client assessment”  
(p.7)

# Assessment

- Interpreters can also assist in explaining procedures necessary for diagnosis and treatment:
  - Explaining how to drink oral contrast
  - Warning signs of side effects of medication
  - Symptoms of high blood glucose levels
- Interpreters can provide presence for patients/clients, which may help to alleviate anxiety, and thereby improving cooperation with unfamiliar tests and procedures (Bagchi, 2010)

# Improving Outcomes

“Professional interpreters, with exceptional language skills and an understanding of the complexities of ...terminology, also possess the cultural competency and sensitivity necessary to break down language barriers and facilitate effective communication and understanding between doctor and patient”.

“Professional interpreters decrease communication errors, increase patient comprehension, equalize health care utilization, improve clinical outcomes and increase satisfaction with communication and services for LEP patients” (Karlner, et al, 2006)

# Use of Interpreters

## Outcomes

- Increase access to health care
- Ensure appropriate diagnosis and treatment
- Improves overall health
- Increases patient/physician communication/relationship
- Builds rapport/trust
- Increased satisfaction with care
- Increased adherence to treatment plan
- Offers clients the ability to take an active role in their care
- Decreased hospitalizations (Lindholm, 2012)

# Outcome

- More satisfied with care
- Ask more questions
- Have better overall information recall
- Are more comfortable discussing sensitive or embarrassing issues
- Improved psychological well-being
- Misattribution of psychiatric symptoms and diagnosis
- Improved health perceptions
- High patient satisfaction (Ku&Flores, 2005, Karliner, 2006)
- Decrease communication errors
- Decreased clinical error
- Increase comprehension
- Improve clinical outcomes
- Improve quality of service
- Increase patient/client safety
- Potentially reduce malpractice lawsuits and sanctions
- Increased follow-up visits
- Increase adherence to medication (Karliner, 2006, Kaur & Venn, 2014)

# Issues to Consider

- Dual Relationships
- Power differences between interpreter and patient/client
- Confidentiality
- Availability of professional interpreters in your area
- Additional time needed for working with interpreters\*
- Cost of additional time and interpretation service

# Communication and LEP

- Without professional interpreters practitioners and clinicians cannot, in good faith, provide accurate, appropriate and meaningful service provision to those who are limited in English proficiency
- Without professional interpreters practitioners and clinicians can place themselves, their licensure and agencies at risk for malpractice litigation and sanctions

The End