



Language Access Advocacy Working Group

Buffalo Immigrant and Refugee Empowerment Coalition (BIREC)

Burmese Community Support Center

Catholic Charities

International Institute of Buffalo

Jericho Road Hope Drop-In Center

Jewish Family Services

Journey's End Refugee Services

Neighborhood Legal Services

Partnership for the Public Good



237 Main Street, Suite 1200
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 852-4191
www.ppgbuffalo.org

Resources for Medical Providers

Interpreter Services

The International Institute of Buffalo
(716) 883-1900
www.iibuff.org

Journey's End Refugee Services
(716) 882-4963 x207
www.jersbuffalo.org

Telephone Services

Language Line Solutions
1(800) 752-6096
www.languageline.com

Cultural Training and Information

Bridging Refugee Youth and Children Services
www.brycs.org

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)
www.cal.org

Ethnomed
www.ethnomed.org

Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center
www.refugeehealthta.org



Language Access

August 2014

Providing Limited English Proficient Individuals with Medical Services

The LEP population

Language access policy is intended to assist those with limited English proficiency (LEP). The law defines LEP individuals as any person who does not speak English as their primary language and has difficulty reading, speaking, writing, or understanding the English language. This population includes immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Understanding the differences between these populations is crucial to delivering effective services.

Why Should Your Practice Ensure Language Access?

Every person deserves quality health care. Ensuring accurate communication between you and your patients is an essential part of that care.

It is good business! The refugee and immigrant population is the fastest growing population in Buffalo and Erie County. Each year, approximately 1,500 refugees are resettled in Buffalo, in addition to the thousands of other foreign language speakers who live here.

It is the Law

Failing to provide appropriate language assistance can put your practice at the risk of violating laws related to medical malpractice, informed consent, breach of the legal duty to warn, and breach of the patient's privacy rights. In addition, federal civil rights laws require meaningful language access from all recipients of federal dollars. The level of access required depends on four factors: (1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program; (2) the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program; (3) the nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program; and (4) the resources available to the program and costs.

It is Reimbursable

New York State Medicaid Reimbursement for Medical Interpreting Services - In December 2012, New York State enacted a provision that offers Medicaid reimbursement for interpreting services for LEP and deaf Medicaid recipients.



Best Practices

Hire trained professionals who can accurately interpret medical terms. Do not rely on family members, friends, or interpreters who are not fully trained.

Use a trained face-to-face interpreter when possible. This is usually the most effective method of delivering language services and should be used in important provider/patient conversations

Hire bilingual staff. This allows your practice to serve patients that speak other languages for no additional cost.

Contract with telephonic interpreting services that provide certified interpreters. This is sometimes a more economical method and can be a great resource in certain situations, such as emergencies.

Have language days. Some providers have incorporated a language day into their regular practice schedule. This allows you to streamline resources when serving the LEP population.