

## **Cultural and Linguistic Competence Standards**

*Resources for Cross Cultural Health Care  
Center for Advancement of Health*

These standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Health Care Services were developed for the Office of Minority Health in the Department of Health and Human Services in May of 1999. The Standards will be circulated for public comment in 2000.

*Based on an analytical review of key laws, regulations, contracts, and standards currently in use by federal and state agencies and other national organizations, these guidelines were developed with input from a national advisory committee of policymakers, providers, and researchers. In this report, each standard is accompanied by commentary that addresses its relationship to existing laws and standards, and offers recommendations for implementation and oversight to providers, policymakers, and advocates.*

### **Preamble:**

Culture and language have considerable impact on how patients access and respond to health care services. To ensure equal access to quality health care by diverse populations, health care organizations and providers should:

1. Promote and support the attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills necessary for staff to work respectfully and effectively with patients and each other in a culturally diverse work environment.
2. Have a comprehensive management strategy to address culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including strategic goals, plans, policies, procedures, and designated staff responsible for implementation.
3. Utilize formal mechanisms for community and consumer involvement in the design and execution of service delivery, including planning, policy making, operations, evaluation, training and, as appropriate, treatment planning.
4. Develop and implement a strategy to recruit, retain and promote qualified, diverse and culturally competent administrative, clinical and support staff that are trained and qualified to address the needs of the racial and ethnic communities being served.
5. Require and arrange for ongoing education and training for administrative, clinical, and support staff in culturally and linguistically competent service delivery.

6. Provide all clients with limited English proficiency (LEP) access to bilingual staff or interpretation services.
7. Provide oral and written notices, including translated signage at key points of contact, to clients in their primary language informing them of their right to receive interpreter services free of charge.
8. Translate and make available signage and commonly used written patient education material and other materials for members of the predominant language groups in service areas.
9. Ensure that interpreters and bilingual staff can demonstrate bilingual proficiency and receive training that includes the skills and ethics of interpreting, and knowledge in both languages of the terms and concepts relevant to clinical or non-clinical encounters. Family or friends are not considered adequate substitutes because they usually lack these abilities.
10. Ensure that the clients' primary spoken language and self-identified race/ethnicity are included in the health care organizations' management information system as well as any patient records used by provider staff.
11. Use a variety of methods to collect and utilize accurate demographic, cultural, epidemiological and clinical outcome data for racial and ethnic groups in the service area, and become informed about the ethnic/cultural needs, resources, and assets of the surrounding community.
12. Undertake ongoing organizational self-assessments of cultural and linguistic competence, and integrate measures of access, satisfaction, quality, and outcomes for CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services) into other organizational internal audits and performance improvement programs.
13. Develop structures and procedures to address cross cultural ethical and legal conflicts in health care delivery and complaints or grievances by patients and staff about unfair, culturally insensitive or discriminatory treatment, or difficulty in accessing services, or denial of services.
14. Prepare an annual progress report documenting the organizations' progress with implementing CLAS standards, including information on programs, staffing, and resources.

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