

**Arizona Department of Health Services
Division of Behavioral Health Services
PROVIDER MANUAL
NARBHA Edition**

Section 10.20 Accessing Interpretation and Translation Services

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10.20.1 Introduction

The Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Minority Health developed national Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service (CLAS) standards that support a more consistent and comprehensive approach to cultural and linguistic competence in health care. Of the 14 Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards, four (Standards 4, 5, 6, and 7, dealing with linguistic competency) are federally mandated. These four standards are referenced below.

10.20.2 References

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Healthcare Standards

10.20.3 Scope

To whom does this apply?

This section applies to all behavioral health providers delivering services within the ADHS/DBHS public behavioral health system.

10.20.4 Did you know ... ?

- According to research by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Minority Health, language assistance such as oral interpretation can have a positive effect on patient satisfaction and comprehension, improvements on delivery measures such as increased amount of time spent with recipients, high clinic return rates, and increases in service utilization. Studies also demonstrate the cost benefits of providing interpretation services, including decreased malpractice claims.
- Oral interpretation and written translation services must be provided “free of charge” to Title XIX/XXI children and their families and adults with a Serious Mental Illness.

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10.20.5 Definitions

[Commonly Encountered LEP Groups](#)

[Interpretation](#)

[Limited English Proficiency](#)

[Linguistic Competence](#)

[Translation](#)

10.20.7-A Required Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards

In 1997, the DHHS Office of Minority Health developed national CLAS standards that support a more consistent and comprehensive approach to cultural and linguistic competence in health care. In 2000, the standards were published as recommendations in the Federal Register. The full list of CLAS standards can be found in [PM Section 3.23 Cultural Competence](#).

How Interpreter Services are Provided

Any person or family member of a person requesting or receiving behavioral health services is eligible for interpreter services in their preferred language. First priority is given to face-to-face interpreter services, by utilizing a linguistically proficient staff person, or an interpreter service. If face-to-face interpreter services are not accessible, the provider may utilize over-the-phone language services through contracted agency interpreters. Over-the-phone services are accessed through either organization:

- **ALTA Language Services at 404.920.3816**
- **Cyacom Language Services at 800-481-3289**
- **A Foreign Language Service at 480-813-4242**

These organizations provide interpretation services, both telephonic and in-person, including American Sign Language and some Tribal Languages. A three-way conference call can be utilized to accomplish over-the-phone interpreter services.

Interpreter Services Procedure for Telephone Calls Received

If a call is received and the person is mono-lingual, or has limited English proficiency, please follow the steps below:

1. First, tell the person as best you can, to hold on as you find someone that can speak with them (*example phrase in Spanish* “Uno momento por favor” = one moment please)

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2. Find a bilingual staff person in the needed language. If a bilingual staff person, that has been deemed proficient in that language, is not available, call either organization to set up telephonic interpreter services:
 - **ALTA Language Services at 404.920.3816**
 - **Cyacom Language Services at 800-481-3289**
 - **A Foreign Language Service at 480-813-4242**
3. By utilizing the conference call mechanism on your phone, have a three-way conference call. Stay on the phone with the person that called, and with the Interpreter.
4. Find out what the person needs and answer their questions, assist them with their needs, refer them to the most appropriate person or agency, as you would do with any other caller.
5. Ensure that the Interpreter Service continues with any transfer of the caller to another organization or person.
6. The person should not be forwarded to voicemail.

Responsible Agencies (RAs) are required to do the following:

Each Responsible Agency is responsible for having an Interpreter and Translator Resource List available to its employees. In addition, the Region's Interpreter and Translator Resource List can be found on the homepage of the NARBHA website, with the NARBHA Human Resource Manager or the NARBHA Receptionist by calling 928-774-7128.

Responsible Agencies notify the NARBHA Cultural and Diversity Awareness Committee (CADAC) through the agency's committee members of changes to the listing of interpreters when changes occur. Agencies that miss the opportunity to provide changes to their list through the CADAC send changes to the committee's chairperson.

For both face-to-face and telephonic interpreter services, each of NARBHA's Responsible Agencies has procedures on:

- Accessing interpreters
- Accessing translation resources
- Maintains a listing of staff and/or others in the community who can converse in other languages (including American Sign Language) and,
- Has procedures on language proficiency testing of bilingual staff

Staff that are interpreters for the agency have a current Interpreter Job Description in their personnel file regarding this function. (Example available at NARBHA Human Resources).

- Interpreter staff receive training on Interpreter Etiquette and the training is documented in the personnel file. (Interpreter Etiquette training form available at NARBHA Human Resources).

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- **Language Proficiency Testing Procedures is required**, of both oral interpretation and written translation skills of bilingual staff utilized. Testing is also required of individuals not employed by the agency that are utilized as interpreters unless the individual providing the service is employed or contracted by an established interpreter services organization that tests its service providers for proficiency.
- Language Service Organizations that Provide Proficiency Testing:
Interpretation and translation language proficiency testing is completed utilizing:
 - ALTA Language Services – (404) 920-3816
 - Cyracom Language Services at (800) 481-3289
- **Proficiency Level**: Staff utilized as interpreters have a language proficiency level of at least the ability to participate in general conversations on routine topics with a slow to normal rate of speech, at minimum. Through Cyracom, a proficiency level of “2” or higher is the minimum. Through ALTA, a proficiency level of “9” or higher is the minimum.
- NARBHA and Provider Agencies that have staff fluent in a Tribal language can use the designated language testing service organizations referenced previously, or have the Tribe verify language proficiency by an official of the Tribe or a method designated by the Tribe.
 - Documentation of the language proficiency verification by the Tribe is considered an alternative which meets the verification of language proficiency interpretation/translation services required.
- Bilingual staff can communicate directly with members in their preferred language once passing proficiency testing. Such Interpreter Services (Code T1013) must be billed in conjunction with other covered services provided.
- Bilingual staff must stay within the scope of their job description when providing bilingual services directly.
- General questions, including questions regarding how to receive services, may be answered by non-clinically trained bilingual staff.
- Non-clinically trained bilingual staff utilized as interpreters for clinical services are accompanied by appropriately trained/privileged staff supervising the session and collaborating with the interpreter on questions and responses to the member and the member’s family.

10.20.8 Accessing Resources for Persons that are Blind or Visually Impaired

Staff read all forms and documents to persons that are visually impaired. Whenever possible based on the document format, important documents and communications are made available in large print (preferably 18 point font) when requested or the need is determined by the recipient of services.

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- The Member Handbook in 18 point font is in printable form on the NARBHA website at www.narbha.org
- Resources for persons that are Blind or Visually Impaired are listed on the NARBHA website in the Interpreter and Translator Resource List.

10.20.9 Accessing Resources for Persons that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The Region's Interpreter Resource List includes a listing of resources for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and is located on the NARBHA website at www.narbha.org, The NARBHA Human Resource Manager can also be contacted at 928-774-7128 for assistance.

- The NARBHA Telemedicine System may be utilized with ASL Interpreters located in Flagstaff to provide services to rural locations. Please contact NARBHA Telemedicine for more information at 928-774-7128.
 - Deaf Link Resources at www.deaflink.com is a resource for ASL interpreter services 24 hours, 7 days a week, through NARBHA's Telemedicine Unit.

10.20.10 Documentation in Clinical Charts of Interpreter Services Provided to Members

Use of face-to-face or over-the-phone interpretation services must be clearly documented in the member's clinical record as well as the behavioral health services provided simultaneously. The clinical record must document each encounter:

- The date and time of the interpreter service provided, including the use of a family member or friend, at each encounter.
- The language utilized and the name of the interpreter at each encounter.
- If Interpreter Services are declined by the Member, this needs to be documented in the clinical record, at each encounter.

10.20.11 Quality of Translated Materials

To ensure the quality of translated materials, NARBHA requires the use of a translator that has been determined to have proficiency with translation skills in the language needed through proficiency testing by:

- ALTA Language Services or
- Cyracom Services.
- Since many Tribal languages are not formally written languages, the Tribe determines the proficiency level of the translator through an acceptable process determined by the Tribe, if such translation is attempted.