**The Joint Commission**

# RESOURCES RELATED TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Below are some resources that may be helpful in learning more about effective communication and planning for and providing language services.  This is not an exhaustive list; many groups are addressing effective communication and the provision of linguistically appropriate health care services.  The Joint Commission does not endorse specific programs or products.

## PRACTICAL GUIDES ON EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Health Research and Educational Trust's (HRET) Disparities Toolkit**
  http://www.hretdisparities.org
  This toolkit is designed to help health care organizations understand the importance of collecting accurate data on race, ethnicity, and primary language of persons with limited English proficiency and/or who are deaf or hard of hearing. Using this Toolkit, organizations can assess their capacity to collect this information and implement a systematic framework designed specifically for obtaining race, ethnicity, and primary language data directly from patients/enrollees or their caregivers in an efficient, effective, and respectful manner.

- **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) Speaking Together Toolkit**
  http://www.rwjf.org/qualityequality/product.jsp?id=29653
  This toolkit provides advice to hospitals on improving the quality and accessibility of their language services.  The toolkit was developed as part of RWJF's *Speaking Together: National Language Services Network*, which was a program involving ten hospitals that worked toward improving the availability and quality of language services for limited English proficient populations.

- **NHeLP's Language Services Resource Guide for Health Care Providers**
  http://www.healthlaw.org/library/item.118835
  This guide was developed to aid health care providers, administrators, interpreters, translators, and others in improving language access and improving health care for their clients and patients. The guide gathers basic information about providing language services in one document. Information includes interpreter and translator associations and agencies, training programs, assessment tools, and other materials.

- **HHS Office on Minority Health (OMH), A Patient-Centered Guide to Implementing Language Access Services in Healthcare Organizations**
  http://www.omhrc.gov/Assets/pdf/Checked/HC-LSIG.pdf
  This guide is intended to help healthcare organizations implement effective language access services to meet the needs of their limited-English-proficient patients, and increase their access to health care.

- **American Medical Association's Ethical Force Program's** *Improving Communication – Improving Care*
  http://www.ethicalforce.org/
  This is a consensus report by the Ethical Force Program that helps health care organizations prioritize effective communication and create environments where staff members and patient populations from diverse backgrounds can communicate better.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **The Joint Commission's** *Hospitals, Language, and Culture* **study**
  http://www.jointcommission.org/PatientSafety/HLC
  The Joint Commission conducted this cross-sectional qualitative study, funded by The California Endowment.  It was designed to gather information about how hospitals are addressing the cultural

and language needs of their diverse patient populations. This website provides multiple reports and resources that are free for download.

- **The Office for Civil Rights' Policy Guidance for Title VI**
  http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/
  This website provides guidance on Title VI as it relates limited English proficient (LEP) populations. The guidance offers an overview of who is covered, basic requirements, definitions of key terms, possible methods for providing meaningful access, examples of frequently encountered scenarios, promising practices, a model language assistance program plan, and enforcement issues.

- **The Office for Civil Rights' Effective Communication webpage**
  http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hospitalcommunication.html
  To help hospitals meet the communication needs of LEP, deaf, or hard of hearing patients, this website provides information and resources related to Title VI, Section 504, and the ADA.

- **Department of Justice's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Business Brief**
  http://www.ada.gov/hospcombr.htm
  This brief provides an overview of what organizations are required to provide in terms of communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing, under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **National Heath Law Program's (NHeLP) Summary of State Law Requirements Addressing Language Needs in Health Care**
  http://www.healthlaw.org/library/item.174993
  This publication outlines each state's statutes and regulations regarding services to limited English proficient persons in health care settings.

- **The Office of Minority Health's (OMH) National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)**
  http://www.omhrc.gov/clas/
  These national standards were developed to encourage health care organizations and individual providers to make their practices more culturally and linguistically accessible. The standards address issues such as cultural competence, linguistically appropriate services, and organizational supports for cultural competence.

- **American Society Testing & Measures Standards *ASTM Standards of Practice***
  http://www.astm.org/Standards/F2089.htm
  This guide identifies the components of quality language interpretation services and establishes criteria for each component. These criteria define the minimum standard of quality services in the language interpretation industry with reference to distinctive characteristics of specific settings.

- **California Healthcare Interpreting Association (CHIA) *California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters***
  http://chiaonline.org/images/Publications/CA_standards_healthcare_interpreters.pdf
  The goal of this document is to standardize healthcare interpreting practices by providing a set of ethical principles, interpreting protocols, and guidance on roles particular to the specialty of healthcare interpreting.

- **International Medical Interpreters Association & Education Development Center, Inc. (IMIA & EDC)** *Medical Interpreting Standards of Practice*
  http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/102.pdf
  These standards of practice were developed to be a vital evaluation and competency tool for professional interpreters all over the country, delineating core performance standards and competencies required of a "competent" interpreter.

- **National Council on Interpreting in Health Care's (NCIHC)** *National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care*
  http://www.ncihc.org
  These standards of practice are intended to be used as a reference by interpreters and those who work with, train, and employ interpreters. They are intended to guide the practice of all interpreters and to acquaint non-interpreters with the standards recognized within the interpreting profession.

- **National Heath Law Program's (NHeLP) Language Access in Health Care Statement of Principles**
  http://www.healthlaw.org/library/item.71365
  This Statement of Principles springs from the work of numerous national organizations to develop an agenda to improve policies and funding for access to health care for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).  The intent is to provide a broad framework to inform efforts to improve health care delivered to LEP individuals.