

# Language Assistance Program Quick Reference Guide

Anthem Blue Cross (Anthem) is committed to providing culturally and linguistically appropriate healthcare services in a competent manner. This means all reasonable accommodations are provided to ensure equal access to communication resources for members. We achieve this through our Language Assistance Program.

**We provide language assistance services to the following members with:**

- Limited English proficiency (LEP).
- Hearing, speech, or visual impairments.
- Culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Language assistance services are not limited to the members identified above.



## Language Assistance Program services and guidelines

Language assistance services are available to members at no cost for those enrolled in Medi-Cal Managed Care (Medi-Cal).

Service offered	Guidelines
<b>Telephonic interpreter services provided at all points of contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Qualified interpreters are proficient in healthcare terminology.</li><li>• Qualified interpreters receive training regarding <i>HIPAA</i> and ethical standards.</li><li>• Points of contact include administrative, clinical, and related services.</li></ul>
<b>Face-to-face and sign language interpreter services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interpreters are available to members, providers, and staff at key points of medical contact.</li><li>• Three days or more advance notice is needed for scheduling face-to-face and sign language interpreters.</li><li>• 24-hour advance notice is requested for cancellations.</li></ul>
<b>TTY services for the hearing impaired</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Services are available for the hearing impaired during business hours via Medi-Cal TTY line: <b>800-735-2922</b>.</li><li>• After-hours services are available through the California Relay Line (<b>711</b>) or Anthem's 24/7 NurseLine (<b>800-224-0336, TTY: 800-368-4424</b>).</li></ul>
<b>Vital documents provided in threshold languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Materials translated prospectively include enrollment, eligibility, and membership information; <i>Explanation of Coverage</i>; and notices of language assistance.</li><li>• Members must indicate their preferred written language to receive prospectively translated materials.</li></ul>
<b>Additional materials translated upon request</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Materials that are member-specific (for example, denial, delay, or claims letters) are sent in English with the offer of translation upon request.</li><li>• We send translated materials to the member no later than 21 days from the request date.</li><li>• Oral translations will be provided for all languages.</li><li>• Translators are proficient in healthcare terminology.</li><li>• Translators receive training regarding <i>HIPAA</i> and ethical standards.</li></ul>

### Threshold language translations available

We designed the Language Assistance Program to meet the growing needs of our state's population as well as our membership. Threshold language translations are available for Medi-Cal members and vary by county. Based on U.S. Census data released in December 2015, the top 18 non-English languages spoken by individuals with LEP in California are: Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Mien, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. These languages will remain in effect until the next U.S. Census Survey.

### Accessing the Language Assistance Program

To access the Language Assistance Program for members with LEP, call our Customer Care Center at the appropriate phone number provided at the end of this guide and ask to speak to an interpreter.

## Cultural sensitivity resources

In addition to language services, the Language Assistance Program offers web-based information regarding: cultural differences including communication styles; healthcare traditions; commonly held beliefs; alternative medicine; and healing disparities including quality of care and preventive care, pain management and treatment, and aging.

[You will find more cultural and linguistic information on our website under Provider Support > Resources > Provider Training Academy:](#)

- Cultural Competency Training — offers information and key components to the provision of culturally competent care
- Caring for Diverse Populations toolkit — offers comprehensive information on working with diverse patients, tools and resources to help mitigate barriers, including materials that can be printed and made available for patients in your office
- My Diverse Patients — resource-rich care provider website that covers topics relevant to providing culturally competent care and services for diverse individuals

Anthem offers additional information in our online provider manuals, also located on this site at *Provider Manuals, Policies & Guidelines*. On this page, choose from the latest manual for Medi-Cal.

## Tips to optimize communications with your patients

[Here are a few tips to optimize communications when working with telephonic interpreters:](#)

- If possible, speak to the interpreter privately prior to the contact, providing relevant information regarding the member and the important information to convey.
- Interpreters are not allowed to rephrase or clarify. Encourage the interpreter to request clarification or to redirect explanations as needed.
- Direct the conversation to the member, not the interpreter.
- Use short sentences limited to a single concept, if possible.
- Allow adequate time for the interpreter to convey the information in the member's language.
- Avoid excessive medical terminology or technical explanations unless the member requests them.
- Avoid interrupting the interpreter.
- If the member's nonverbal cues indicate confusion, ask the member to summarize or restate what you have communicated.



## Working effectively with members with LEP

Offer the Language Assistance Program to members who appear to be LEP, even if a member brings a family member or friend to their healthcare visit to act as an interpreter. The use of a qualified interpreter is preferred because relatives and friends are not usually proficient in healthcare terminology.

## More communication tips

Here are a few more communication tips for your use when working with patients:

- Speak slowly, not loudly, with your patient.
- Organize information into short, simple sentences. Place important topics at the beginning and end of the conversation.
- Use open-ended questions to assess for understanding.
- If the member initially refused interpreter services and is not demonstrating full understanding, offer interpreter services again.
- Monitor nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, positioning, and body language. These may indicate understanding or confusion.

Anthem hopes you will find this information useful in your everyday encounters with members with LEP.

If you have any questions or require assistance with the Language Assistance Program, contact our Customer Care Center at the appropriate phone number below:

- Medi-Cal  
(outside of Los Angeles County):  
**800-407-4627**
- Medi-Cal  
(inside Los Angeles County):  
**888-285-7801**

## Best practices for providers

Hospitals, physicians, and other healthcare professionals should:

- Complete a language skills self-assessment, which is kept on file. The assessment provided by the Industry Collaboration Effort is a prescreening/self-assessment tool to be done before seeking interpreter credentialing. It does not qualify as appropriate documentation for staff to be considered a qualified interpreter that adheres to generally accepted interpreter ethics and principles.
  - The Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment Tool is available on our website under Resources > Forms > For Providers. Choose the correct form depending on the region.
- Document the member's preferred spoken and written language in their office chart or medical record.
- Document the communication aid used for the visit (for example, the person who provided interpretation services); any use or refusal of a professional interpreter; or the use of family, friend, office staff or the provider as the interpreter.
  - *Request/Refusal for Interpreter Services* forms are available on our website under Resources > Forms > Patient Care. Choose the appropriate form, available in a variety of threshold languages.
- Enhance their own knowledge and appreciation of the cultural differences that are inherent in their region by taking advantage of the opportunities listed on the Anthem website.
  - Post the Free Interpretation Services sign at key points of contact. The Free Interpretation Services sign is available on our website under > Resources > Provider Training Academy > Interpreter Services. Under *Free Interpreter Resources*, choose **Free Interpreter Services Poster**.

<https://providers.anthem.com/ca>

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