

Cultural competency and patient engagement

As an element of our provider directory, Anthem Blue Cross (Anthem) monitors whether a participating provider has taken cultural competency training. This is based in part on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requirements. We are providing you with the following information on cultural competency to support this requirement. It is excerpted from our full provider training for cultural competency, and we encourage you to visit <https://mediproviders.anthem.com/ca> > Provider Support > Manuals, Training & More > Resources > Cultural Competency Training to view the full presentation and additional resources.

We are committed to cultural competency

As a contracted health care provider with Anthem, our expectation is for you and your staff to gain and continually increase your knowledge and skill, as well as improve your attitude, about the sensitivities of diverse cultures.

How does culture impact the care provided?

Culture informs us of:

- Concepts of health and healing.
- How illness, disease and their causes are perceived.
- The behaviors of patients who are seeking health care.
- Attitudes toward health care providers.

Importance of cultural differences in health care settings

Cultural factors may influence the way individuals:

- Define and evaluate situations.
- Seek help for problems.
- Present their problems, situations and information to others.
- Respond to interventions and service plans.

Cultural awareness helps you modify your behaviors to respond to the needs of others while maintaining a professional level of respect and objectivity.

Impact of increasing your cultural competency awareness

You have a profound, positive impact on the quality of interactions with your patients by acknowledging their varied behaviors, beliefs and values, and incorporating those variables into their assessments, interactions and treatments.

What is culture?

- Culture refers to integrated patterns of human behavior including language, thoughts, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions that unite a group of people.
- We use culture to create standards for how we act and behave socially.
- Culture is not only learned — it is shared, adaptive and constantly changing.

Clear communication: the foundation of culturally competent care

Benefits include:

- Higher safety and adherence.
- Higher physician and patient satisfaction.
- Increased office process.
- Fewer medical malpractice risks.

Language assistance services

The federal requirements on language assistance, published as *Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act*, provides specific limitations on the use of certain individuals as interpreters. The limitations include the use of bilingual staff, as well as, adults and minors who accompany a patient.

Language assistance is available from Anthem at no cost to members and providers, including:

- Interpreter support at a medical point of contact.
- American Sign Language interpreters.
- Speech-to-text interpretation for patients with hearing loss who do not sign.

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

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- Member materials in alternative formats (for example, large print, audio and Braille).

For more information, visit <https://mediproviders.anthem.com/ca> > Provider Support > Free Interpreting Services.

Using professionally trained interpreters:

- Hold a brief introductory discussion with the interpreter.
- Introduce yourself and give a brief nature of the call/visit.
- Reassure the patient about your confidentiality practices.
- Be prepared to pace your discussion with the patient to allow time for interpretation.
- Avoid interrupting during interpretation.
- Be aware that in some languages, it may take longer to explain a word or a concept.

Disability sensitivity and awareness — *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* and health care providers

Title II and *Title III* of the *ADA* and *Section 504* require that medical care providers offer individuals with disabilities the following:

- Full and equal access to their health care services and facilities
- Reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures when necessary to make health care services fully available to individuals with disabilities unless the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services (in other words, alter the essential nature of the services)

From the first contact a member has with your office, the staff should be knowledgeable about not refusing services, providing separate or unequal access to health care services to any individual with a disability, and avoiding giving the appearance of discriminating against any person.

Accommodations for those with disabilities

You must deliver services in a manner that accommodates the needs of members by:

- Providing flexibility in scheduling.
- Providing interpreters or translators for members who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Having an understanding of disability-competent care.
- Ensuring individuals with disabilities and their companions are provided with reasonable accommodations to ensure effective communication (including auxiliary aids and services).
- Having accessible facilities.
- Providing reasonable modifications/accommodations.

The *Disability Etiquette* publication from the United Spinal Association offers tips on interacting with people with disabilities. For more information, visit <https://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf>.

References:

- “Culture and Cultural Competency,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov>.
- “Clear Communication: The Foundation of Culturally Competent Care.”
- “Better communication, better care: Provider tools to care for diverse populations,” Health Industry Collaboration Effort, Inc. (July 2010), http://www.iceforhealth.org/library/documents/ICE_C&L_Provider_Tool_Kit.10-06.pdf.
- “A physician's practical guide to culturally competent care,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health (45-145), https://cccm.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/PDF_Docs/Physicians_QIO_Facilitator_GuideMEDQIC.pdf.
- Weiss, B. D. *Health literacy and patient safety: Help patients understand; Manual for clinicians (2nd edition)* (Chicago: American Medical Association Foundation, 2007), http://med.fsu.edu/userFiles/file/ahcc_health_clinicians_manual.pdf.