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David Gallegos

LLAC Immediate Past
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Advocacy Center

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To Whom It May Concern:

A significant number of patients who receive services from the community health clinics and health care providers that receive PCASG funding are limited English proficient (LEP). High quality care for the New Orleans community depends on health care services being available and accessible to those LEP individuals. Language appropriate services are necessary.

The added burden to the community clinics and health care providers of paying for the additional cost of interpreter and translation services has been and continues to be an obstacle in integrating comprehensive quality language access services throughout local health care services.

Several states have tapped available federal resource offered through optional Medicaid reimbursement for language access services.

Attached is drafted language for reimbursement of interpreter and translation services through Medicaid in Louisiana. This language is modeled after Connecticut's language.

Please contact us with any questions or if we can assist in this process in any way.

Attentively,

Louisiana Language Access Coalition

Draft Language for Medicaid Waiver – Language Services:

The Department of Health & Hospitals shall initiate payments for language services, including interpreting and translation, in connection with the enrollment of, retention of, and use of services by individuals for whom English is not their primary language in Medicaid and LACHIP.

The Department of Health & Hospitals shall make these payments for language services when language services are provided by interpreters and translators employed by Medicaid and LACHIP providers or contracted by Medicaid providers for the time spent interpreting for Medicaid patients. For interpreters employed by Medicaid and LACHIP providers, the Department of Health & Hospitals shall provide payment regardless of whether the individual who interprets is a full-time interpreter or an individual who interprets on an as-needed basis.

The Department of Health & Hospitals shall make the payments to the employer of the interpreter (if the employer is a Medicaid or LACHIP provider) or to the language services provider who contracts with or employs an interpreter to provide interpreting for a Medicaid or LACHIP provider.

Payments for foreign language interpreters shall be provided only for qualified interpreters who:

- (1) Are over the age of eighteen;
- (2) Are proficient and able to communicate information accurately in both English and in the language for which interpreting is needed;
- (3) Possess, to the extent necessary for communication, knowledge in English and in the language for which interpreting is needed of:
 - (A) specialized healthcare terms and concepts; and
 - (B) any particularized vocabulary and phraseology used by the limited English proficient person or healthcare provider, such as regional usages of terms;
- (4) Attest to comply with the National Code of Ethics and National Standards of Practice as published by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care;
- (5) Attest to adhere to the role of an interpreter as defined by the National Code of Ethics and National Standards of Practice as published by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care; and
- (6) Attest to adhere to HIPAA requirements to the same extent as the healthcare provider for whom interpreting is provided.

Payment for signed language interpreters shall be provided only for qualified interpreters who have certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.