

**L.A. Care**  
HEALTH PLAN®

For a **Healthy Life**



## Section 1:

*What You Need to Know*

## What you need to know

The mission of L.A. Care Health Plan's Health Education, Cultural and Linguistic Services Department (HECLS) is to improve patient health status through the delivery of wellness and disease prevention programs and to ensure access to culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and health care. This is what you need to know in order to provide quality care to your patients and help you meet the changing service requirements.

### Provider Responsibilities – How Can L.A. Care Help You?

Under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, any agency, program, or activity that receives funding from the federal government may not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national origin. L.A. Care is committed to ensuring culturally and linguistically appropriate care is being provided to our patients. Below is more information on what you are required to do and the various ways that we can help you better provide equal access and care for all patients.

#### *Provider Network Linguistic Capabilities*

L.A. Care providers are required to have a system in place to identify the language proficiency of all practitioners and staff who are bilingual and communicate with a patient in another language other than English. This includes maintaining documentation of their bilingual qualifications on file and this information must be updated at least annually.

Qualifications to be kept on file may include, but are not limited to:

- Documentation that demonstrates proficiency in another language
- Language capability self-assessment
- Resume or curriculum vitae which includes number of years worked as an interpreter

Furthermore, provider's offices are to submit updates regarding any changes to the Provider Network Operations Department. L.A. Care Health Plan monitors disclosure forms signed by bilingual providers and/or office staff, attesting to their fluency in languages other than English through the credentialing process and through the facility site review process. Submission of the language capabilities of your office staff is important as this information is included in the L.A. Care Health Plan provider directory which is distributed to patients and made available online at [www.lacare.org](http://www.lacare.org).

#### *Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment*

L.A. Care along with Plan Partners and the I.C.E. Collaborative Team have joined forces to develop an Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment that can be used to document bilingual skills of providers and staff.

The attached self-assessment tool is provided as a resource to assist you in identifying language skills and resources existing in your health care setting.

This tool will provide a basic and subjective idea of the bilingual capabilities of your staff. Please complete the survey enclosed for each member of your staff, and ensure each language other than English spoken by that staff is documented. Use the evaluation guidelines on this form to determine the level of fluency for each language in the following areas: speaking, reading, and writing.

You may distribute the tool to **all your clinical and non-clinical employees using their non-English language skills in the workplace**. The information collected may be used as a first step to improve communication with your diverse patient base.

Qualifications of all bilingual staff should be attached to the document enclosed and kept on file. Once bilingual staff members have been identified, **they should be referred to professional language assessment agencies** to evaluate the level of proficiency. There are many sources that will help you assess the bilingual capacity of staff.

Depending on their level of confirmed fluency, your practice would be able to make use of qualified bilingual staff to help your practice better communicate with your patients in the client's language of preference

This survey will not affect your performance evaluation. It is just a way for us to improve our customer service and to make you part of such efforts.



Dear Physician:

The attached self-assessment tool was developed by health plans to help identify and document bilingual capabilities of practitioners and their staff. It also provides a way for providers and health plans to improve patient/member care and service in a collaborative manner.

It is important that all bilingual practitioners and their staff who speak with patients in a language other than English complete this form, and keep a copy on file along with additional qualifications.

Changes to the language capability of bilingual practitioners and their staff must be reported to their affiliated medical group(s)/health plan(s) as this information is shared with patients.

Practitioners and staff who rate themselves with speaking, reading, or writing capabilities below level 3 as defined on the Employee Skills Self-Assessment Key should not use their bilingual skills or serve as interpreters and/or translators.

Qualified interpreting services are available through your patients' health plans. This includes telephonic and face-to-face interpreting services, including American Sign Language. For immediate assistance, or to schedule interpreting services for a patient, call the patient's health plan.

**For Medi-Cal members, please call the number listed next to the patient's health plan in the table below:**

Health Net	1-800-675-6110	L.A. Care Health Plan	1-888-839-9909
Anthem Blue Cross	1-888-285-7801	Care1st Health Plan	1-800-605-2556
Molina Healthcare	1-888-665-4621		

***Thank you for your assistance.***

The Cultural & Linguistics Collaborative of Los Angeles County

# Employee Language Skills Self Assessment Key

The attached language self-assessment form is a tool to document the language capability of practitioners and their staff. It is important that a signed copy be kept on file for each bilingual employee. If there are any changes, please notify the medical group/health plans with whom you're affiliated as this information is shared with members. Thank you.

Key	Spoken Language
(1)	Satisfies elementary needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Able to understand and respond to 2-3 word entry-level questions. May require slow speech and repetition.
(2)	Meets basic conversational needs. Able to understand and respond to simple questions. Can handle casual conversation about work, school, and family. Has difficulty with vocabulary and grammar.
(3)	Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy and vocabulary to have effective formal and informal conversations on most familiar topics related to health care.
(4)	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels related to health care work needs. Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of his/her experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary. Unaffected by rate of speech.
(5)	Speaks proficiently equivalent to that of an educated native speaker. Has complete fluency in the language, including health care topics, such that speech in all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idioms, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural preferences. Usually has received formal education in target language.

Key	Reading
(1)	No functional ability to read. Able to understand and read only a few key words.
(2)	Limited to simple vocabulary and sentence structure.
(3)	Understands conventional topics, non-technical terms and health care terms.
(4)	Understands materials that contain idioms and specialized health care terminology; understands a broad range of literature.
(5)	Understands sophisticated materials, including those related to academic, medical and technical vocabulary.

Key	Writing
(1)	No functional ability to write the language and is only able to write single elementary words.
(2)	Able to write simple sentences. Requires major editing.
(3)	Writes on conventional and simple health care topics with few errors in spelling and structure. Requires minor editing.
(4)	Writes on academic, technical, and most health care and medical topics with few errors in structure and spelling.
(5)	Writes proficiently equivalent to that of an educated native speaker/writer. Writes with idiomatic ease of expression and feeling for the style of language. Proficient in medical, healthcare, academic and technical vocabulary.

<b>Interpretation vs. Translation</b>	<p><b>Interpretation:</b> Involves spoken communication between two parties, such as between a patient and a pharmacist, or between a family member and doctor.</p> <p><b>Translation:</b> Involves very different skills from interpretation. A translator takes a written document in one language and changes it into a document in another language, preserving the tone and meaning of the original.</p> <p><i>Source: University of Washington Medical Center</i></p>
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*(Modifications from the approved I.C.E Collaborative document were made for this page only).*

**Approved on 03/17/2010 by the C&L Collaborative of Los Angeles**





**EMPLOYEE LANGUAGE SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL**  
**(For Clinical and Non-Clinical Employees)**

**This self assessment is intended for clinical and non-clinical employees who are bilingual and communicate with a patient in a language other than English.**

**Employee's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Department/Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Days:** Mon / Tues/ Wed/ Thurs/ Fri/ Sat/ Sun **Work Hours (Please Specify):** \_\_\_\_\_

- Directions:** (1) Write any/all language(s) or dialects you know.  
 (2) Indicate how fluently you speak, read and/or write each language (See attached key).  
 (3) Specify if you currently use the language regularly as a part of your job responsibilities.

Language	Dialect, region, or country	Fluency: see attached key (Circle)		As part of your job, do you use this language to speak with patients? (Circle)	As part of your job, do you read this language? (Circle)	As part of your job, do you write this language? (Circle)
		Speaking	Reading			
1.		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
2.		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
3.		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
4.		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

**Please check off additional qualifications/credentials that support language proficiency level, and attach them to this form.**

**Note:** Per state guideline, bilingual providers and staff who communicate with patients in a language other than English must identify and maintain qualifications of their bilingual capabilities on file.

Formal language assessment by qualified agency

Native speaker with a higher education in language, which demonstrates sufficient accuracy and vocabulary in health care setting.

Documentation of successful completion of a specific type of interpreter training

Documentation of years employed as an interpreter and/or translator

Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Individuals who rate themselves with speaking, reading, or writing capabilities below level 3 as defined on the Employee Skills Self Assessment Key, attached to this document, should not use their bilingual skills or serve as interpreters and/or translators. For assistance, please contact the patient's contracted health plan for immediate telephonic interpreter assistance.

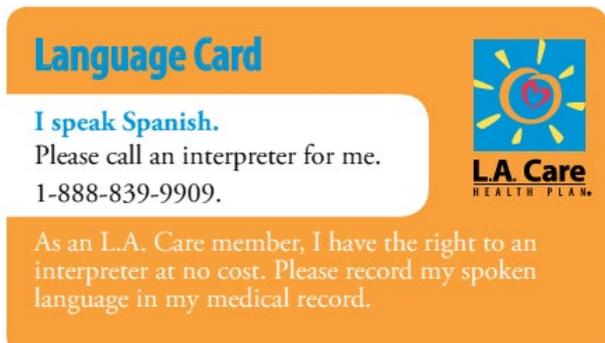
**TO BE SIGNED BY THE PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest that the information provided above is accurate. Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Patients also receive a Language Card which they can use to tell their doctor what language they speak. This card is available in 15 languages and is mailed directly to patients to identify their preferred language and request for an interpreter. They can use this card to ask for an interpreter when they make a doctor's appointment. They can also ask for an interpreter when they are at the doctor's office by showing this card. Ensure your front office staff is familiar with this card and know how to proceed to meet the patients' needs in their preferred language. Below is a sample of a language card.

### FRONT



### BACK



### Accessing Interpreting Services

Provider offices are encouraged to access L.A. Care's telephonic, face-to-face, and ASL interpreting services for L.A. Care direct line of business patients.

### 24-Hour Telephonic Interpreting Services

Telephonic interpreting services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in over 200 languages and can serve as a back-up to face-to-face interpreting. To access telephonic interpreting services call **(888) 930-3031**.

Please have the following information ready in order to receive services:

- Language needed
- L.A. Care member ID number
- Provider license number (for network practitioners)

L.A. Care has telephonic interpreting cards for providers that providers can keep on hand. See a sample below.



Call L.A. Care's Cultural & Linguistic Services Unit at **213-694-1250** extension **4523** to request one.

### *Face-to-face Interpreting Services*

Face-to-face interpreting services, including American Sign Language, can be obtained through L.A. Care. Please call L.A. Care's Member Services Department at 1-888-839-9909 at least ten business days prior to the patient's appointment.

Have the following patient information ready:

- Provider name
- Language being requested (including American Sign Language)
- L.A. Care patient's name and ID number
- Date of birth
- Requestor name and contact number
- Date, time, and duration of appointment
- Location of appointment (i.e. address, suite #, major cross streets)
- Type of appointment (i.e. consultation, specialist, OB/GYN, etc.)
- Purpose of appointment (i.e. well visit, medical visit, follow-up, lab, etc.)
- Contact person at appointment site
- Other special instructions (i.e. gender of interpreter, patient has disabilities, driving directions, parking, etc.)

It is important that patients have access to after-hours interpreting services. At a minimum, provider sites are to ensure that their answering machine informs the patient on how to access interpreting services.

For Medi-Cal patients, please call the number listed next to the patient's corresponding health plan to request interpreting services:

<b>Anthem Blue Cross</b>	<b>1-888-285-7801</b>
<b>Kaiser Permanente</b>	<b>1-800-464-4000</b>
<b>Care1st Health Plan</b>	<b>1-800-605-2556</b>
<b>L.A. Care</b>	<b>1-888-839-9909</b>

### ***Required Documentation***

L.A. Care Health Plan providers must not require, or suggest to, LEP patients that they provide their own interpreter. Friends and family should not be used as interpreters. The use of minors as interpreters is discouraged except in extraordinary circumstances such as medical emergencies, and only if interpreter assistance cannot be provided. The use of friends and family members, particularly minors, may compromise the reliability of medical information.

Family members or friends may be used only if requested by the patient after being informed of the right to free interpreting services. Patient refusal of professional interpreting services and request to use a family member or friend is required to be documented in the medical chart. The patient's preferred spoken and written language must also be documented in their medical chart.

Methods that can be used to document request/refusal of interpreting services include:

- Intake form/registration
- Stamp
- Medical chart (use of colored labels)
- Request/refusal form

L.A. Care has several forms in place that can be used by your office. Please go on L.A. Care's website to download the forms at: <http://www.lacare.org/providers/resources/downloadableforms>.

### *Assistance for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing*

L.A. Care Health Plan ensures equal access to health care services for patients with hearing, speech and visual loss through the coordination of interpreting services and the provision of auxiliary aids during business-hours, after-hours and for emergency situations. This includes:

#### **American Sign Language Interpreting (ASL):**

- L.A. Care Health Plan provides 24-hour ASL services at no cost to patients. Just call 1-888-839-9909 and follow the directions listed in the Face-to-Face Interpreting Services section of this toolkit.

#### **California Relay Service (CRS) - TTY**

- The California Relay Service is an exchange service which enables a person using a teletypewriter (TTY) to communicate by phone with a person who does not use a TTY and vice-versa. There is no charge for this service. Network providers may utilize the CRS directly for patients with hearing or speech loss. The number for CRS is 711.

### *Translation Services*

Quality translation provides LEP patients with equal access to health information and helps providers deliver better healthcare to improve health outcomes. L.A. Care routinely sends written patient informing materials to patients in their preferred threshold language and/or alternative format.

### *Materials in Threshold Languages*

Patient materials are available in threshold languages. Threshold languages are the primary languages spoken by LEP population groups meeting a numeric threshold.

- The Threshold Languages for Medi-Cal Managed Care and Cal MediConnect in Los Angeles County are determined by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and were released in Medi-Cal Managed Care All Plan Letter 14-008. The numeric threshold as defined by the DHCS is 3,000 or five percent (5%), whichever is lower, of mandatory Medi-Cal beneficiaries residing in the service area who speak a language other than English.
- The Threshold Languages for L.A. Care Covered, Healthy Kids, and Personal Assistance Services Council and Service Employees International Union (PASC-SEIU) are determined by the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC). The numeric threshold as defined by the DMHC is 3,000 or five percent (5%), whichever is lower, of enrollees who speak a language other than English.

Below is a table of the threshold languages by line of business.

Medi-Cal and Cal MediConnect	Healthy Kids	PASC-SEIU	L.A. Care Covered
English	English	English	English
Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Chinese	Korean	Chinese	
Armenian		Armenian	
Arabic			
Farsi			
Khmer			
Korean			
Russian			
Tagalog			
Vietnamese			

Types of materials available to the patients include but are not limited to: evidence of coverage, complaint & grievance forms, notice of action letters (i.e., denial, modification, deferral, and termination), health education materials, health plan information, complaint & grievance forms, and other patient informing materials. Materials in non-threshold languages are available upon request. To request information in another language, please call L.A. Care at **1-888-839-9909**.

***Materials in Alternative Formats***

L.A. Care also provides written patient informing materials in other formats, including:

- Large print - 18pt font (All threshold languages)
- Audio (English and Spanish)

Braille can also be made available upon request. Some L.A. Care materials are available on the L.A. Care website ([www.lacare.org](http://www.lacare.org)) in a text-only format with the ability to adjust the font size.

***Referrals to Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Community Services***

L.A. Care Health Plan maintains a closed-loop system to refer and coordinate culturally and linguistically appropriate services for direct line of business patients. Extending beyond direct health care services, L.A. Care Health Plan’s C&L Services Department assists patients and providers in coordinating the appropriate service using online databases, such as [www.healthycity.org](http://www.healthycity.org).

Health education, cultural and linguistic services referrals have never been easier! Just follow these three easy steps:

1. Go onto L.A. Care Health’s Plan’s Website and access the Health Education Provider Resources: <http://www.lacare.org/providers/provider-resources/health-education-tools>.
2. Click on the “Refer L.A. Care patients to free Health Education, Cultural and Linguistic Services” link to open up the Health Education, Cultural and Linguistic Services Referral Form.
3. Complete and fax a hard copy of the Health Education, Cultural & Linguistic Services Referral form to the Health Education, Cultural and Linguistic Services Department. The fax information is on the form.

Class topics and services include:

Chronic Conditions	Health Education	Nutrition/Weight Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arthritis</li> <li>• Asthma</li> <li>• Chronic Condition Support</li> <li>• COPD</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Disability Support</li> <li>• Hypertension/ Hyperlipidemia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cold or Flu?</li> <li>• Fitness for Older Adults</li> <li>• Pre-Diabetes</li> <li>• Stress &amp; Anxiety Management</li> <li>• What To Do When Your Child Get Sick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition and Physical Activity for Ages 2-5</li> <li>• Nutrition for Families</li> <li>• Weight Management</li> </ul>
Medical Nutrition Therapy	Cultural & Linguistic Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MNT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic Group Resources</li> <li>• Services for People with Disabilities</li> <li>• Services for Older Adults</li> </ul>	

### *Complaints and Grievances*

Patients have the right to submit a complaint when their cultural or linguistic needs are not met. Provider offices must have a process in place for patients to submit a complaint when their cultural or linguistic needs are not met. Complaint forms are available in various languages and can be accessed on L.A. Care’s website at <http://www.lacare.org/grievancelocalization>.

### *Cultural Competency Trainings*

Providers and office staff are encouraged to participate in cultural competency trainings. Providers who provide services to Cal MediConnect patients are required to complete cultural competency training annually. The following trainings are available through L.A Care:

- **Cultural Competency:** a 1-hour course for providers, front and back office staff. Learn how to provide care more effectively to culturally diverse patients. This course explores cultural awareness and assumptions, and examines the skills and steps to achieve cultural competency. Available on-site and online (<https://lacareuniversity.torchlms.com>).

- **Interpreting Services - How to Communicate Effectively with LEP Patients:** a 1-hour course for providers, front and back office staff. Examine rules and regulations surrounding language assistance services and the importance of using qualified interpreters. Learn how to access L.A. Care's interpreting services and work effectively with interpreters. Available on-site and online (<https://lacareuniversity.torchlms.com>).
- **Communicating through Healthcare Interpreters:** an online CME course is for physicians. Learn how to reduce doctor-patient language barriers and work effectively with in-person and telephonic interpreters. The first 25 physicians to register and complete the course will receive a \$100 stipend.
- **Annual Cultural Competence – Various topics:** L.A. Care collaborates with Plan Partners to offer trainings on various C&L topics to network providers and nurses throughout the year. Flyers for these trainings will be distributed when they are available.

Information about upcoming trainings is available on the L.A. Care website at [www.lacare.org](http://www.lacare.org) or by contacting L.A. Care's Cultural & Linguistic Services Unit at [CLStrainings@lacare.org](mailto:CLStrainings@lacare.org).

Additional resources are available through various organizations. For a list of additional resources please refer to Section 5 of this toolkit.

For more information about any of these services or resources call L.A. Care's Cultural & Linguistic Services Unit at **213-694-1250** extension **4523**.