

Language Assistance Plans

Ensuring Legal Compliance and Improved Quality of Patient Care

Survey Results

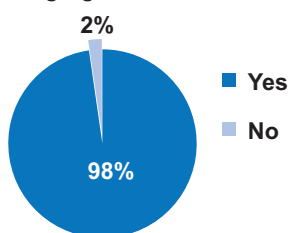
AHA Solutions, in collaboration with Bruce L. Adelson, Esq. and CyraCom, conducted a webinar on January 14th, 2010 discussing how language assistance can and should be provided, how to analyze and measure its effectiveness, and how staff can be trained on the proper use of language services. A recording of the webinar and a white paper are available for download on www.cyracom.com/AHA/LAP_Webinar.

The webinar surveys were conducted during registration and after the webinar with more than 350 total participants. This document presents and discusses the survey findings.

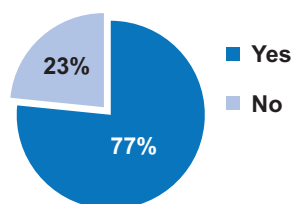
Language Services vs. Language Assistance Plans

98% of all respondents indicated that they provide language services in their organization. In comparison, only 77% of all respondents who provide language services have a plan in place. Thus, 23% of respondents' organizations that provide language services do so without the guidance of a Language Assistance Plan.

Language Services Provided



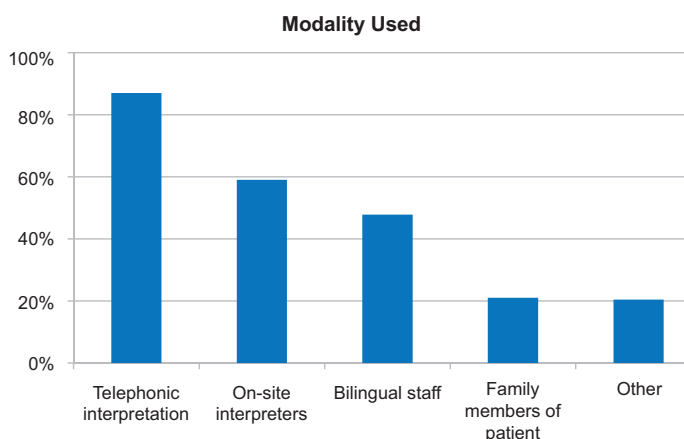
Language Assistance Plan in Place



Language Assistance Modalities

Most hospitals reported using a combination of different modalities to provide language services. Surprisingly, over 20% of all hospitals stated that interpretation was provided by patients' family members. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) advises that providers should not plan to rely on an LEP person's family members and need to advise the patient that

a trained interpreter is available without charge. Asking family members to interpret, in most cases, contradicts DHHS advice and could qualify as a Title VI infringement.



Staff Training

Training of clinical staff is essential to ensure the proper adoption of language services by nurses, doctors, and other staff members. Training should include specific instruction on when and how to access language services (policies and procedures), how to document the usage, and how to effectively work with on-site and telephonic interpreters.

Staff members should be aware of the requirement to provide meaningful access to information and services for LEP persons. All staff that interact with the public must be given authoritative and effective training on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Only 29% of survey respondents could say for sure that they provide Title VI training and a large number was uncertain if Title VI training was offered at their organization.

Review of Language Assistance Plans

Reviewing Language Assistance Plans involves measuring their implementation, checking adherence to policies, and monitoring potential shifts in patient demographics. Effective plans also set clear goals, establish management accountability, and include regular reviews. Less than half of our survey respondents with Language Assistance Plans in place, however, review them on a regular basis.

If you have a Language Assistance Plan, how often do you review its success?

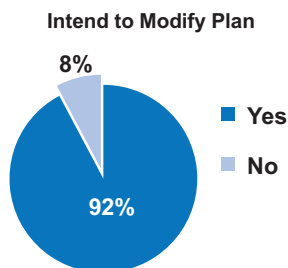
Quarterly	Yearly	Sporadically
27%	29%	44%

Ensuring Legal Compliance

Take Another Look at the Plan

After the elements of a legally compliant Language Assistance Plan were discussed during the webinar, we asked respondents about their satisfaction with their current plans.

Did this webinar prompt you to review your language assistance plan or start creating one? With only 8% of the respondents indicating satisfaction with their existing Language Assistance Plans, the complexity of Title VI is clearly illustrated.



Next Steps

Improving Language Programs

The Language Assistance Plan is the centerpiece for a legally compliant and effective language services program. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) created a comprehensive self assessment tool that can be used to determine if all aspects of a compliant plan are covered, which can be found at the link below.

<http://www.justice.gov/crt/let/selfassesstool.htm>

Our survey identified five important areas of a Language Assistance Plan and asked respondents who were dissatisfied with their plans to indicate which area they would focus on (multiple responses were allowed).

Interestingly, more than 40% of respondents stated that all areas need work. Staff training and tracking/evaluation were the two areas reported as requiring the most improvement.

Areas for Improvement



Download More Resources

In addition to resources on Language Assistance Plans, CyraCom also offers information on:

- Healthcare interpreter certification
- Language services and patient safety
- Comparison between on-site interpreters, telephonic interpreters, and bilingual staff (August 13th, 2009 webinar)
- How to comply with the legal requirements of language access

Resources can be downloaded from www.cyracom.com/resources

About CyraCom

CyraCom is the leading provider of innovative language solutions for healthcare including Over-the-Phone Interpretation, Video Interpretation, Translation and Localization, and Assessment and Training.

For more information, visit www.cyracom.com or call (800) 713-4950 ext. 1.

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9001:2015, 13611:2014, 17100:2015
Quality Management System
Guidelines for Community Interpreting
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