



# STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Corning Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, NY 12237

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.  
*Commissioner*

Dennis P. Whalen  
*Executive Deputy Commissioner*

May 5, 2005

Dear Chief Executive Officer:

As you are aware, recent media attention has underscored the importance of effective communication in both accessing and providing quality health care. The inability to communicate effectively due to limited English proficiency (LEP), hearing or visual impairments, and/or mental, developmental or physical disabilities, presents a significant barrier for patients to receive safe and appropriate medical services.

This letter is written with the purpose of reiterating the need and the obligation of New York State hospitals to provide communication assistance for patients with limited English proficiency (LEP), hearing and/or visual impairments, or mental, developmental, and physical disabilities. In addition, this letter will share with you best practices from model programs and identify available resources to assist hospitals in meeting their regulatory requirements.

## **Regulatory Requirements**

As you are all aware, current regulatory requirements pertaining to the provision of interpreter and translator and/or transcription services for those patients requiring communication assistance are found in Title 10 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations (10NYCRR), Section 405.7, Patient's Rights. The requirements of the section are summarized below:

- Hospitals are expected to accommodate the reasonable needs of any patient who requires assistance in communication to ensure meaningful access to care and services.
- Facilities must assure linguistically appropriate services for non-English speaking groups that comprise more than one percent of the total hospital service area population.

- Interpreters for patients with LEP and persons skilled in communicating with vision or hearing impaired individuals or mental, developmental, and/or physically disabled individuals should be available to meet inpatient and outpatient needs within 20 minutes and in the emergency service within 10 minutes of a request to the hospital by the patient or patient representative.
- Each facility must develop a plan to address the needs of people who require language interpretations and translations, as well as those who require special accommodations due to hearing or vision loss or a mental, developmental, or physical disability.
- Translations or transcriptions of significant hospital forms, instructions and information in order to provide effective visual, oral and written communication with patients are expected, consistent with current requirements. Particular attention must be given to assuring that appropriate linguistic and communication assistance is available for patients when providing or discussing important medical information; specifically, treatment options, informed consent, discharge instructions and advance directives.
- Each facility retains responsibility for managing resources and assuring competency of services provided. Only qualified personnel should be retained to prepare written translations of information that is required or essential to the needs of patients.

While the Department of Health recognizes that providing communication assistance to all patients might be a challenge for healthcare providers, we believe that effective communication is an integral part in the provision of safe, quality health care. The Department of Health believes that a patient's ability to communicate effectively should be considered among the highest priorities for facilities. Attention paid to quality communication assistance will not only benefit hospitals by improving patient satisfaction and reducing access related complaints, but also will assure better treatment outcomes.

### **Best Practices and Resources**

We recognize that the development of a program to comply with the minimum standards as set forth by 10 NYCRR is a challenging task whether a hospital is located in a rural area or an urban setting that serves a diverse population. Many facilities around the State, however cognizant of this challenge, have developed successful communication assistance programs that fulfill regulatory requirements and capitalize on existing resources.

The Department of Health is currently reviewing the existing regulations under Section 405.7 Patient's Rights, and in the near future will be developing regulatory changes to strengthen support for communication assistance in hospitals. In doing so, we will be collaborating with the hospital associations, as well as community based organizations.

As mentioned before, many facilities have developed successful communication assistance programs. Included below are some examples:

The Queens Health Network, including Queens Hospital Center and Elmhurst Hospital Center, has established a language service program that provides communication assistance to an extremely diverse patient population. The full text of their policies and procedures for this program are located at <http://www.thenyic.org/templates/documentFinder.asp?did=258>.

Some of the best practices from this program are as follows:

- Appoint a Language Assistance Coordinator to coordinate, implement, assess, evaluate, and monitor the provision of communication assistance.
- Routinely assess the demographics of the hospital service area to identify facility needs and assure compliance with language access requirements.
- Issue “I Speak...” Cards to LEP patients to inform them of the availability of free interpreter services. A sample of an “I Speak...” Card is enclosed with this letter.
- Identify multilingual language personnel employed by the facility and actively recruit individuals possessing language skills from the surrounding community. Train volunteer personnel in medical interpretation and provide support for personnel to assist with patient communication assistance as needed.
- Develop a Language Identification Card to be used if a patient’s language is unable to be determined. A patient can be shown a list of messages, translated into many languages that says, “Point to your language, an interpreter will be called”. A sample of this card is enclosed with this letter.

Additional resources may be found at the following locations:

- The New York Immigration Coalition is actively involved in advocating for meaningful access to quality health care for patients with LEP. They have many resources to share on their website at <http://www.thenyic.org/issue.asp?cid=76>.
- The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO) is actively involved in supporting culturally appropriate health care. Their website can be accessed at <http://www.jcaho.org/about+us/hlc/index.htm>.
- The Access Project website provides a free download of their publication “Language Services Action Kit: Interpreter Services in Health Care Settings for People with Limited English Proficiency”, which is available under ‘policy guides’ at <http://www.accessproject.org/publications.htm>.

I am confident that by proactively addressing the issue of communication assistance in our hospitals, we will improve the quality of the health care delivery for all New Yorkers, regardless of their language proficiency or their ability to communicate. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

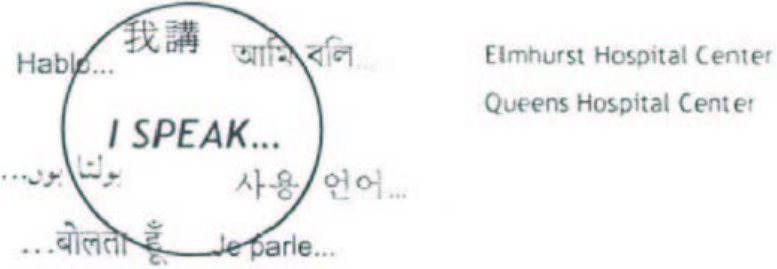
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Antonia C. Novello M.D. M.P.H. Dr. P.H.".

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H.  
Commissioner of Health

Enclosures

## QUEENS HEALTH NETWORK



Please call an interpreter (x1500), this customer requires language assistance. See reverse side for language.

- (Bengali) ○ আমার বিনামূল্যে বাংলা অনুবাদ দরকার।
- (Cantonese) ○ 我需要免費的廣東話口譯。
- (Hindi) ○ मुझे मुफ्त हिन्दी दुभाषिया सेवा की आवश्यकता है।
- (Korean) ○ 저는 무료 한국어 통역을 원합니다.
- (Mandarin) ○ 我需要免費的國語口譯。
- (Spanish) ○ Necesito interpretación gratis en español.
- (Urdu) ○ مجھے اردو میں ترجمان کی مفت خدمات کی ضرورت ہے
- (Other) ○ J'ai besoin d'interprétation gratuite en \_\_\_\_\_.
- I need free interpretation into \_\_\_\_\_.



## Europe

78	<b>Albanian</b> Tregoni me gisht gjahën që flim. Do të gjejmë një përkthyes për ju.	Shqip
72	<b>Armenian</b> Ձեզ արևո՞ւ ո՞ր լեզու խոսո՞ւք Ինչպե՞ս կարգավիճիք ձեր կրթչի սուսը.	Հայերեն
158	<b>Basque</b> Zeure izkuntza atzamarraque erakotzi. Euzkeratzañ hateri delako deusagu.	Euzkera
69	<b>Bulgarian</b> Посочете Ваши език. Ние ще извикаме преводач за Вас.	Български език
132	<b>Catalan</b> Assenyali amb el dit el seu idioma. Es trucarà a un intèrpret.	Català
67	<b>Croatian</b> Molim Vas, polcažite nam Vaš jezik. Zvat ćemo tumača za Vas	Hrvatski
68	<b>Czech</b> Ukažte, který je váš jazyk. Zavoláme tlumočnicka.	Česky
55	<b>Danish</b> Peg på dit sprog En tolk vil blive tilkaldt.	Dansk
56	<b>Dutch</b> Wij uw taal aan. Wij zullen u een tolk geven.	Nederlands
77	<b>Estonian</b> Näidake oma emakeelele Me müüriseme teile tõlgi.	Eesti Keel
52	<b>Finnish</b> Osoittakaa teidän kielenne. Tulkki kututaan autistamaan teitä.	Suomi
58	<b>French</b> Montrez-nous quelle langue vous parlez. Nous vous fournirons un/e interprète.	Français
57	<b>German</b> Zeigen Sie auf Ihre Sprache. Wir rufen einen Dolmetscher an.	Deutsch
71	<b>Greek</b> Δείξτε ποιά γλώσσα μιλάτε και θα κληθεί ένας διαμετρητής.	Ελληνικά
65	<b>Hungarian</b> Válassza ki az ön által beszélt nyelvet. Kaposoljuk a tolmácsot.	Magyar

133	<b>Icelandic</b> Berðu á þitt tungumál. Það verður hringt í tólk.	Íslenska
59	<b>Italian</b> Faccisi vedere qual è la sua lingua. Un interprete sarà chiamato.	Italiano
75	<b>Lithuanian</b> Parodyk tavo kalbamą kalbą Vertėjas bus pakviestas.	Lietuvių Kalba
66	<b>Macedonian</b> Posočete molim Vaš jezik. Ke vikame prevodilac Vas da doide.	Makedonski
51	<b>Norwegian</b> Pek på ditt språk En tolk vil bli tilkalt.	Norsk
62	<b>Polish</b> Proszę wskazać na swój język ojczysty. Pomagacz zostanie poproszony do telefonu.	Polski
61	<b>Portuguese</b> Aponte seu idioma. Providenciaremos um intérprete.	Português
66	<b>Romanian</b> Indicați limba pe care o vorbiți. Veți fi pus în legătură cu un interpret.	Românește
78	<b>Russian</b> Укажите, на каком языке Вы говорите. Сейчас Вам вызовут переводчика.	Русский Язык
138	<b>Serbian</b> Molim Vas, pokažite nam Vaš jezik. Zvaćemo tumača za Vas.	Српски
64	<b>Slovak</b> Ukažte na vašu reč. Zavoláme tlumočnicka.	Slovensky
68	<b>Spanish</b> Señale su idioma. Se llamará a un intérprete.	Español
53	<b>Swedish</b> Peka ut Ett språk En tolk kommer att tillkallas.	Svenska
76	<b>Ukrainian</b> Покажіть, якою мовою ви говорите. Зараз виклинуть вам перекладача.	Українська Мова
135	<b>Yiddish</b> פאָרשן זיך אַז וואָס די שפּראַך איז און ווען וועט אַן אַרבעטער זיין פאַר אונדז.	ענגליש

## Pacific Islands

126	<b>Aklán</b> Ihuro mo ro atong hambae Magtawag kami et mag-interpretè	Aklanon
127	<b>Fijian</b> Dusia na nomu vosa. Ena qai kacivi edua mi vakavaka dewa.	Kalviti
113	<b>Ilocano</b> Iudom iti saom. Unsayab kami ti interpretè.	Ilokano
50	<b>Indonesian</b> Tunjukkan bahasamu. Jurubahasa akan disediakan.	Bahasa Indonesia
61	<b>Malay</b> Tunjukkan yang mana bahasa anda. Seorang jurubahasa akan diberitahu.	Bahasa Malaysia
128	<b>Samoan</b> Tusi lou 'a'ao i lou gagana. O le a vala'uina se tasi e fa'amatala 'upu mo 'oe.	Gagana Samoa
117	<b>Tagalog</b> Pakiusap mo nga ang iyong wika. Magpapatawag ako ng interpretè.	Tagalog
128	<b>Tongan</b> Tahu kihe lea 'oku ke lea 'aki. E fe'u'utaki kihe fakatonulea.	Tonga

## North America, South America, and Caribbean

58	<b>French</b> Montrez-nous quelle langue vous parlez. Nous vous fournirons un/e interprète.	Français
125	<b>Haitian Creole</b> Monte lang ou-a Yap voye cheche yon entèprèt.	Kreyòl Ayisyen
144	<b>Navajo</b> Saa'd bée hoonisnigi nila' bee bi'idi'itililil. A'at' balne'e fa' rabsichij' hodoonilil.	Diné
61	<b>Portuguese</b> Aponte seu idioma. Providenciaremos um intérprete.	Português
60	<b>Spanish</b> Señale su idioma. Se llamará a un intérprete.	Español



# Language Identification Card

As a Language Line Services customer you have access to over-the-phone interpretation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Use this Language Identification Card in a face-to-face situation, to determine which language a person speaks. The Language ID Card lists the languages most frequently encountered in North America, grouped by the geographical region where they are commonly spoken.

- To use the Language ID Card efficiently, locate the geographical region where you believe the non-English speaker may be from (Pacific Islands, Europe, etc.)
- Show the person the languages listed for that region. The message underneath each language says: "Point to your language. An Interpreter will be called."

Sample:

00 **English** English  
Point to your language.  
An interpreter will be called.

- Refer to your Quick Reference Guide (QRG) to access an interpreter through Language Line Services. In most cases, an interpreter is available within seconds.
- If you are unable to identify the language, our representative will help you.

Please note: Listing of languages within this card does not guarantee availability of interpreters in those languages. Language Line Services interpreters from English into more than 140 languages, only the most requested languages are listed here. This list is subject to change based upon demand.

© LLS 2021 • For more information about our services, from North America call 1-800-757-6036, option 1. Language Line Services, One Lower Republic Drive, Monterey, CA 93940

