Improving use of qualified Interpreters for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Patients

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Problem Statement

Low utilization of qualified interpreters when communicating with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) patients during provision of care has a negative impact on quality and patient safety.

Negatively impacts effective communication, increases readmission rate, Length of Stay (LOS), and exposes the organization to a greater risk of liability.

Current Conditions

26,002 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) patients (+ 2.4 % over FY16)

Many LEP patients can understand and speak English at a conversational level but they don’t have sufficient experience with the U.S. health care system or with the health care vocabulary to understand their own health information.

120,020 LEP admissions/visits (+ 2.98 % over FY16)

54.1 % of LEP patients do not received a qualified interpreter during inpatient/ED admission, or outpatient visit (FY17)

Readmission rate for some LEP groups is 1.4 % higher than English speaking patients.
Importance of Using Qualified Medical Interpreters

- Ensures patient safety + quality of care - Reduces length of stay and readmission rates
- Ensures accurate history - Decreases errors in communication - Reduces cost of care -
- It’s required by federal regulations -

**DON’T CONFUSE** you patient’s social fluency in English with ability to understand medical information.

**ASK** your patient in what language they prefer to receive health information. Preferred Language is listed in EPIC’s Patient Banner.

**INFORM** your patient of the importance of communicating through a qualified interpreter to receive health information.

**DON’T USE** family members, friends, or untrained bilingual staff to communicate with your patient as it can result in interpretation errors or omissions that compromise patient safety and have legal and financial consequences toUMMMC.

**WELCOME** family participation - but inform them that for safety reasons, UMMMC policy specifies that a professional medical interpreter must be utilized (in-person, by phone/video) to facilitate clinical communication.

**USE A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER**, it’s the patient’s right!

Interpreter Availability: **24/7**
For All Interpreter Services: **774-441-6793** (Option 1)

**On-Site Interpreters**
Dial extension 1-6793 (Option 1)
Provide urgency of request, type of medical encounter, provider’s name and contact information

**Over the Phone**
Dial extension 4-9924
Use clinical area access code for 200+ languages readily available

**Video Interpreting**
Over 17 Languages including ASL
Call Interpreter Services for information or equipment