

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Policy Manual: Medi-Cal Manual</b>	<b>Origination Date: 2/00</b>	<b>Policy #: IV CL1</b>
<b>Policy Title: Cultural and Linguistic P &amp; P</b>	<b>Revision Dates: 2/00, 6/01, 2/03, 8/07</b>	
<b>C &amp; L</b>	<b>Last Reviewed Date: 1/21/04: 3/06</b>	<b>Page 1 of 5</b>

### Policy:

ProMed’s population is culturally and linguistically diverse. ProMed recognizes that this diversity sometimes serves as a barrier to Medi-Cal members and it affects the member's willingness to access all available services.

The responsibility of facilitating access for non-English speaking members lies on ProMed for the majority of HMO members. ProMed does not require members to provide their own interpreter when utilizing the services available to them through Medi-Cal Managed Care.

Health care services will be presented in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner utilizing member’s primary language.

### Availability and Coordination of Linguistic Services

- Interpreter services are available through the Medi-Cal HMO at no charge when assessing health care.
- Member refusal of interpreter services must be documented.
- Friends and family are only used as an interpreter when specifically requested by the member. Minors are not to be used as an interpreter.
- Member may request fact to face or telephone interpreter services to discuss complex medical information and treatment options.
- Informative documents must be available and translated into threshold languages (usually from HMO)
- Members have a right to file a complaint or grievance if linguistic needs are not met
- Each provider office should be aware of and have a translator card explaining how to access services
- Practitioner offices are informed of the availability of the California Relay Service for the deaf

### Procedure:

#### **A. Provider Language Capabilities:**

1. During the credentialing process, all physicians are asked to indicate their office foreign language abilities.

2. Each office's foreign language capabilities are provided to the HMO for directory information, and proper placement of Medi-Cal Managed Care member based on language specifications.
3. All materials distributed to providers are made available in the primary threshold languages.

**B. Role of Provider's Bilingual Staff:**

1. The role of the bilingual staff in the office of the providers is to assist members to access and receive medical services and to understand the instructions they receive from the person speaking to them. If the member speaks a language not spoken by a staff person, the telephone interpreter service should be utilized.

**C. Tracking and Updating Linguistic Capacity:**

1. It is the responsibility of the Provider's office to notify ProMed in writing within 30 days of a change in the linguistic capacity of the office affecting the provider's ability to provide health services. The provider database and Provider Directory are up-dated accordingly.

**Telephone Interpreter Services:**

**Purpose**

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964, a 24-hour telephonic interpreter services system has been contracted with the Health Plans to ensure members always have access to interpreter services.

- ProMed has contracted with AT&T Language Line services to provide telephone translation services to members. AT&T offers translation services in 140 languages 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- ProMed offers its providers the option to access these services through ProMed's contract with AT&T.
- Providers and their staff are able to contact the AT&T Language Line through direct contact with ProMed's receptionist.

**Procedure**

**Phone Interpreter:**

1. The provider or member calls the Health Plan Customer Service and notifies the representative which language an interpreter is requesting.
2. The Health Plan Customer Service Representative will connect to the interpreter service and a three-way call occurs on the phone between the Health Plan's Customer Service Representative, the member/provider and the interpreter. All questions are answered over the telephone.
3. Once the three-way call is connected with the interpreter services, the Health Plan will disconnect to maintain confidentiality.

### **Face-To-Face Interpretation:**

The member must have Medi-Cal or Healthy Families. Also, they *must have an appointment already scheduled (i.e., MD visit, diagnostic studies)*. The Health Plan must have the member's eligibility information and the provider must be contracted with the Health Plan.

1. To schedule translation services for an appointment, there must be a 72-hour advance scheduling notice to the Health Plan. The office should call Customer Service.
2. The Plan must have the member's eligibility information and the provider must be contracted with the Health Plan.
3. The office should be able to answer questions from the Health Plan Customer Service Representative regarding the member.
4. The Health Plan Customer Service Representative will follow up with a call to the member and provider once interpreter services have been confirmed.

### **Pharmacies:**

1. State Sponsored Programs' pharmacy providers have interpreter services available to them by accessing the Interpreter Services through the Health Plan.
2. The Health Plan sends contracted pharmacies, semi-annually (by phone or fax), telephone numbers of Language Translation Services for all counties.

### **Access to Interpreter Services for Hearing and/or Speech Impaired Members**

#### **Policy**

To ensure equal access to healthcare for ProMed patients who are hearing and/or speech impaired. To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ProMed and affiliates will ensure that all hearing and/or speech-impaired members will have access to free interpreter services.

#### **Procedure**

1. ProMed will be responsible for facilitating the process and access to interpretation services for hearing and/or speech impaired patients.
2. ProMed will use California Relay Services to communicate with hearing and/or speech impaired members over the telephone.
3. ProMed will contract with an American Sign Language interpreting agency to provide quality face-to-face interpretation services to hearing and/or speech impaired members or relay on Health Plan to provide the services
4. To request a sign language interpreter for a hearing and/or speech impaired patient through the Health Plan, the provider must follow the following steps:

- a. Call Health Plan's Cultural and Linguistics (C&L) Specialist no less than 5-7 days in advance.
- b. Provide the following information:
  - 1) Provider Name
  - 2) Patient Name and ID Number
  - 3) Patient's Gender
  - 4) Date of Appointment
  - 5) Time of Appointment
  - 6) Type of Appointment (i.e.; routine exam, specialist, lab results OB/GYN, etc.)
  - 7) Location of Appointment
  - 8) Other special instructions (i.e.; patient has other disabilities, driving directions, etc.)

**Please keep the following in mind:**

Whether working with the interpreters face-to-face or over the phone, there are things you can do to enhance the communication among all the parties:

- Learn proper forms of address. Use of these titles conveys respect and a willingness to learn about the culture.
- Learn basic words and sentences. Become familiar with common words and terminology. This will assist you in conveying the correct information and increase the chance that you will pick up on misinformation or misinterpretations.
- Use a positive tone of voice. Never be condescending, judgmental or patronizing.
- Repeat important information. Always give the reason or purpose for a treatment or prescription.
- Reinforce verbal interaction with materials written in the member's language and/or visual aids.

Nonverbal communication is an important element when working with individuals from other cultures. Facial expressions and body language are specific to each culture. Observe differences to minimize misunderstandings and unintentional offenses.

**Low Literacy and Its Impact on The Health Professional:**

According to a National study conducted by Northcutt, one out of five American adults lacks the literacy skills necessary to function in our society. This means that one in five adults have reading skills below the fifth grade level. Due to these low literacy levels, many adults are unable to reference documents, follow written instructions, or comprehend written materials.

The problems confronting those with low literacy skills impact all health professionals. One of the goals of Medi-Cal Managed Care is to ensure that our members understand and can effectively manage their conditions. The methods and tools used to educate impact the realization of this goal.

**Methods of working with low literacy skills and diverse cultures:**

- Provide educational materials that incorporate the cultural values, beliefs, and practices of your target population.
- Use words and phrases used by the population. Use professional jargon or technical terminology, and then explain with common usage. Be as explicit as the culture will allow.
- Use printed material that is easy to understand. This would be at the 4th grade reading level.
- Use pictures, posters, during, or visual materials for people with limited reading ability.
- Allow time for the education to occur.