



Torrance Hospital IPA

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To: All THIPA Providers
From: Joanne Moser, COO
Date: 12/29/2008
Re: SB 853

Effective January 1, 2009 a new law goes into effect. (SB 853) requires California health plans to establish a Language Assistance Program (LAP) for commercial members who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). The Department of Managed Healthcare will oversee the implementation of the new law.

This means that California health plans must provide **free of charge** to all their commercial members, oral interpretive services to LEP members at all medical points of contact. This does not apply to senior members.

What this means to you as the provider:

- Providers should document the member's preferred spoken and written language in their office chart or medical record.
- Providers should document the use or refusal of professional interpreters. The plans will provide this service. Refer to the table below.
- If a patient brings a family or friend to their health care visit, please offer the use of a professional interpreter.
Note: Document the communication aid used for the visit (person who provided interpretation services, use of family, office staff, etc.).
- Providers should contact the patient's health plan 24 hours prior to the health care visit for interpretive services if feasible. Otherwise, the health plan's professional interpretation vendors are available in all languages within 10 minutes.

The following is a list of health plans and their respective contact information for oral professional interpretive services, and vital document translation services.

Health Plan Oral Translation Services

Health Plan Name	Oral Interpretation Contact#
Aetna Health Plan	1-877-287-0117
Anthem Blue Cross	1-888-254-2721
Blue Shield of California	1-866-346-7198
Cigna Health Plan	1-800-244-6224
Great-West Healthcare	1-800-663-8081
Health Net of California	1-800-522-0088
Health Net of California - After-Hours Interpreter Assistance (6:00pm – 8:00am)	1-800-546-4570
PacifiCare	1-800-624-8822



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Tips for working with Telephonic Interpreters:

Telephonic interpreter services allow for immediate contact with a professional interpreter. Here are some strategies to optimize communication:

- If possible, speak to the interpreter privately prior to the contact, providing relevant information regarding the member and the important information to convey.
- Interpreters are not allowed to rephrase or clarify. Encourage the interpreter to request clarification or to redirect explanations as needed.
- Direct the conversation to the member, not the interpreter.
- Use short sentences limited to a single concept if possible.
- Allow adequate time for the interpreter to convey the information in the member's language.
- Avoid medical jargon or technical explanations unless they are requested by the member.
- Avoid interrupting the interpreter.
- If the member's non-verbal cues indicate confusion, ask the member to summarize or restate what has been communicated.

We at THIPA sincerely hope this information is useful in your everyday encounters with Limited English Proficient members.