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**Section N: Language Assistance Program**

**N1: Obtaining Access to Cultural and Linguistic Services**

State and Federal regulations require CenCal Health to make interpreter and translation services available for Limited English Proficient (LEP) members. LEP members include those who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. CenCal Health is also required to facilitate, promote, and provide training in cultural competency for its staff, as well as for health network staff and CenCal Health providers. CenCal Health’s Cultural and Linguistic Services program provides and facilitates interpreter and translation services.

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) periodically audits CenCal Health’s Language Assistance Program which includes interpreter and translation services, as well as on our provider trainings. DHCS auditors may select individual provider offices to review as a part of this audit, to verify whether LEP members are informed of the availability of language assistance and have been offered interpreter services. CenCal Health will contact, in advance, provider offices selected by the DHCS to participate in its cultural and linguistic services audit when possible.

**N2: Accessing Interpreter Services**

Providers may request interpreter services for their CenCal Health patients with limited English proficiency (LEP). We encourage providers to use CenCal Health’s 24/7 telephonic/over the phone interpreting (OPI) services for most routine appointments. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) for ASL, Spanish and 19 other languages are also now available for specialty appointments through Certified Language International (CLI) by using their assigned password. Providers may also request face-to-face interpreter services (Spanish, Mixteco, ASL) if criteria for these services are met for a network interpreter to be sent to the appointment, when available. Providers needing a Mixteco interpreter can pre-schedule these services through Certified Language International (CLI) or directly through CenCal Health if CLI is unable to fulfill the request. For help in identifying your patient’s preferred language, see the Provider section of the CenCal Health website.

**How to Request Interpreter Services**

- Verify the member’s eligibility and identify if the member is enrolled with CenCal Health. The member **MUST** be a member of CenCal Health to use CenCal Health interpreting services, and you may be responsible for payment if determined to be misusing services for non-CenCal Health members.
  - Telephonic/ over the phone interpreter service (OPI) is to be used for all routine services that do not meet the criteria as noted in Section N, N7 Language Access Program. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
  - Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) service is to be used for ASL members and 21 other spoken languages available on demand. Please note that only ASL and Spanish are available 24/7.

For cost-effectiveness, CenCal Health asks providers to utilize CLI's voice-only interpreting services whenever possible, and use VRI for complex appointments. For a list of all languages go to [cencalhealth.org/providers/cultural-linguistic-resources/](https://www.cencalhealth.org/providers/cultural-linguistic-resources/)

- Face-to-face (in-person) Spanish, Mixteco, and ASL interpreter services, are available based upon the noted criteria in Section N7. This service is available for scheduled medical appointments in an ambulatory setting, and requires at least five working days' advance notice.
  - American Sign Language is available on-demand through VRI, however, if it requires a face-to-face interpreter, please request at least 5 working days in advance notice.
  - Mixteco interpreters are available through CLI, but it is recommended that they be requested at least 2 weeks prior to the appointment time. If CLI is unable to fulfill the request the provider may request these services directly from CenCal Health.
- Please have the following information ready for Face-to-Face scheduling at the time of the request:
    - Member's name
    - Member's CIN or ID#
    - Member's gender and age
    - Date and Time of appointment
    - Type of visit and approximate duration within the noted criteria (does not apply to ASL)
    - Name of doctor/facility
    - Address and phone number of appointment/location
    - For Mixteco members only: Name of the town they are from
  - If the member is eligible with CenCal Health, please contact CenCal Health's Member Services Department by calling **(877) 814-1861**. Prior authorization is required if criteria is met.

**Reference Link:**

Language List and Hours of operation

<https://www.cencalhealth.org/providers/cultural-linguistic-resources/>

### **N3: Documenting Member Refusal of Interpreter Services**

CenCal Health ensures that qualified interpreters are professionally trained, culturally competent, adhere to interpreter ethical principles, and are well-versed in medical terminology and managed care concepts. Because of these requirements, it is important that provider offices document when members refuse to use the telephonic, video, or face-to-face qualified interpreter services provided by CenCal Health. We recommend documenting that free, qualified medical interpreter services were offered to the member in their preferred language, as well as documenting the refusal of any of the interpreter services available to providers (telephonic, VRI, or face-to-face) in the member's record. Documenting refusals can protect the provider and the provider's practice and it ensures consistency when medical records are monitored through site reviews or audits to ensure adequacy of CenCal Health's Language Assistance program.

Under Section 1557 of the ACA, an accompanying adult can provide interpretation in non-emergency situations if three conditions are met: 1.) a member specifically ask that an accompanying adult be the interpreter, 2.) that accompanying adult agrees to interpret and 3.) "reliance on that adult for such assistance is appropriate under the circumstances. Because providers still maintain the legal responsibility for providing qualified medical interpreters, it is recommended that the provider document for each encounter the details of how all 3 conditions were met.

### **N4: Tips for Documenting Telephonic, Video or Face-to-Face Interpreter Services**

- CenCal Health recommends documenting in the member's medical record:
  - whether the interpreter services were telephonic (OPI), VRI, or face to face

- interpreter language, including ASL
- the name of the vendor providing services, i.e., CLI or CenCal Health
- interpreter name or number
- If the member was offered interpreter services and they refused, it is important to note in the member record for that visit that free, qualified medical interpreter services were offered in the member's preferred language and were refused .
- Using a family member or friend to interpret should be discouraged. However, if the member insists on using a family member or friend, it is extremely important to document this in the medical record. Minors should never be used to interpret. Consider offering a telephonic or video interpreter in addition to the family member/friend to ensure accuracy of interpretation when this occurs.
- For all limited English proficient (LEP) members, it is a best practice to document the member's preferred language in paper and or electronic medical records in the manner that best fits your practice.

#### **N5: Working with Interpreters for Face-to-Face, Telephonic, and Video Services**

Certified Languages International (<https://certifiedlanguages.com>) hires the very best interpreters available from a nationwide database.

MICOP, provides trained, qualified, and professional telephonic, and face-to-face Mixteco interpreters who follow established ethical principles when interpreting.

Our face-to-face interpreters for Spanish and ASL needs are independent contractors who we have assessed and tested to assure that they have the highest level of accuracy and professionalism.

However, language interpretation is a three-way conversation between yourself, your patient and the interpreter. Please discuss concerns or issues together to improve all parties' experience, and report any feedback you would like CenCal Health to know to CenCal Health's Cultural & Linguistic Services Manager.

#### **N6: Working with Limited English Proficient (LEP) Members**

It is important that providers know how to identify, offer and access interpreter services for LEP members. Below are some recommended tips on how to work with limited English proficient members.

- **Who are considered LEP members?** Individuals who do not identify English as their preferred language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English, may be considered LEP.
- **How to identify LEP members over the phone.** An LEP member may exhibit the following characteristics:
  - Is quiet or does not respond to questions.
  - Responds with a simple "yes" or "no," or gives inappropriate or inconsistent answers to your questions.
  - May have trouble communicating in English or you may have a very difficult time understanding what he or she is trying to communicate.
  - Identifies as LEP by requesting language assistance.
- **How to offer interpreter services to an LEP member when a member does not speak English and you are unable to discern the language.** If you are unable to identify the language spoken by the LEP member, you should request telephonic or video interpreter services through Certified Languages International (CLI) to identify the language needed. . You can also show the member the CLI Language Identification card and have them point to the language that they speak.
- **How to best communicate with an LEP member who speaks some English but with whom you are having difficulty communicating.** Speak slowly and clearly with the member. Do not speak loudly or

shout. Use simple words and short sentences. Using a qualified interpreter is always recommended to ensure effective communication and to allow the member to fully understand and express themselves.

- **How to offer interpreter services to the member.** Here are a couple of recommended ways to offer interpreter services:
  - “I think I am having trouble explaining this to you, and I really want to make sure you understand. Would you mind if we connected with an interpreter to help us? Which language do you prefer to speak?”
  - “I am going to connect us with an interpreter. Which language do you speak?” Call Certified Languages International for assistance.
  - If using Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), the member can point to the language they speak.
- Best practice to capture language preference. For LEP members, it is a best practice to capture the member’s preferred language and record it in the plan or provider’s member data system. You may want to consider asking the following question:
  - “In order for (provider’s name) to be able to communicate most effectively with you, may I ask what is your preferred spoken and written language for discussing health care?”

### N7: Language Access Program

CenCal Health offers language assistance and interpreter services for qualifying visits, to assist with communication during medical services for our membership only.

Telephonic and video interpreting services are simple, available 24 hours a day, and free of cost to providers and members. These services can assist with communication between providers and members who do not speak the same.

To access language services, complete the steps below:

#### Telephonic Interpreter Services

1. Dial the toll-free number: **(800) 225-5254**
2. Provide operator customer code: **48CEN**
3. Indicate to operator that you are calling from **CenCal Health – Providers**
4. Request Language needed
5. Provide your name and phone number, provider’s last name, NPI #, CenCal Health member ID and patient name
6. For languages of lesser diffusion, like Mixteco, it is suggested that appointments be scheduled 1-2 weeks ahead of time.
  - You will need to provide the following information in addition to information listed above:
    - a. Date, time, and time zone for the scheduled call
    - b. Estimated call duration
    - c. Language needed (for **Mixteco** must share name of the town the member is from)
    - d. Contact name and phone number
    - e. Nature of call
    - f. Request to be informed at least 3 days prior to the appointment id they are unable to cover the appointment
  - You will be given:
    - A reference number for the appointment
    - a confirmation once an interpreter is secured

#### Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)

1. Go to the VRI web address: **cencalhp.cli-video.com**
2. Enter the VRI access code: **48cencalhp**
3. Enter required information:

- Caller's full name
- Phone number
- Doctor's last name
- NPI #
- Member ID #
- Patients last name

4. Select the appropriate language to connect to an interpreter via video  
VRI User Guide for VRI

### Face-to-Face Interpreters

Face-To-Face interpreter services may be authorized by CenCal Health for members requiring the following CenCal Health-covered services:

- Services for members who are deaf and hard of hearing (American Sign Language (ASL))
- Abuse or sexual assault issues
- End of life issues/ Hospice
- Complex procedures or courses of therapy
- First Physical Therapy appointment and re-check appointment
- First Oncology Appointment
- First Orthopedic Appointments

Prior authorization via the Member Services Line at (877) 814-1861 is required for face-to-face interpreter services requests for those Spanish-speaking members who meet the criteria noted above. CenCal Health encourages providers to coordinate face-to-face interpreter services at least 5 business days prior to appointment. Upon authorization of service, the Cultural and Linguistic Services Manager will schedule a qualified interpreter for the requested date of service. For more information regarding [Language Assistance](#), please visit CenCal Health's website.

#### Reference Links:

User Guider for VRI

[cencalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/clivriuserguidewithbluestreatmttechsupport202003.pdf](https://www.cencalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/clivriuserguidewithbluestreatmttechsupport202003.pdf)

VRI Frequently Asked Questioning

[clivrifaq202003.pdf \(cencalhealth.org\)](https://www.cencalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/clivrifaq202003.pdf)

VRI Minimum Requirements

[cencalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/clivriminimumrequirements202003-1.pdf](https://www.cencalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/clivriminimumrequirements202003-1.pdf)

### N8: Language Assistance

ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, qualified [language assistance services](#) are available to you free of charge. Call CenCal Health Member Services at 1-877-814-1861, or if you cannot hear or speak well (TTY/TDD: 1-833-556-2560 or CA Relay at 711).

#### Reference Link:

CenCal Health Language Assistance Taglines

<https://www.cencalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Tagline-CenCal-Health-M-MS-HIYL-0623-new.pdf>