

## Implementing Cultural Competent Care

Passport Health Plan (PHP) and Passport Advantage (PAD) want to ensure our providers are well informed about federal mandates affecting them as recipients of federal funds. To assist you, the Plan created the Cultural and Linguistic Services Program (CLSP) to offer education and consultations to participating providers.

In this Medical Office Note, we outline information we consider vital to your practice.

### What does Title VI mean for providers?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits recipients of Medicaid and Medicare (as programs receiving federal financial assistance) from being excluded on the grounds of race, color or national origin. This has been interpreted to include persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and those with sensory impairments such as hearing or vision difficulties.

### Am I required to comply with Title VI?

Yes. Compliance with Title VI is mandatory for individuals and groups that receive federal funds either directly or indirectly. To adhere to Title VI, the Plan and its providers must make reasonable efforts to effectively communicate with members with LEP and sensory impairments.

### What are the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS)?

In March 2001, the Office of Minority Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued 14 Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS). These standards address the needs of racial, ethnic, and linguistic population groups that have experienced unequal access to the American health care system. The CLAS Standards are organized under three categories:

1. Culturally competent care (standards 1-3)
2. Language access services (standards 4-7)
3. Organizational supports for cultural competence (8-14)

## Am I required to comply with the CLAS Standards?

Yes. Compliance with certain CLAS standards is **mandatory**, and failure to comply can result in federal fines and/or loss of federal funds.

As a recipient of federal funds, all Medicaid and Medicare providers must abide by the following CLAS Standards:

- Standard 4: Language assistance must be provided at no cost to patients/consumers
- Standard 5: Signage and written notices of interpreter services must be available at no cost
- Standard 6: Your office must use qualified/certified interpreters/translators
- Standard 7: All vital documents must be translated

## I want to ensure my compliance but don't have the resources. Can you help me?

The CLSP program is committed in assisting our providers in meeting these standards. We hope you will take advantage of the many resources we offer, such as:

- Our **Cultural and Linguistic Services Program** staff who can answer your questions and advise you on Title VI/CLAS Standards and compliance issues. Call (502) 585-7932 or e-mail us at [cals@amerihealthmercy.org](mailto:cals@amerihealthmercy.org) for more information.
- **On-site training** about Title VI and the CLAS Standards we provide free of charge for you and your office staff.
- A **Provider Tool Kit**, including multi-lingual posters, language line information and signage that you can place in your office.

## Are there other steps I can take to comply?

Yes. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recommends data on the member's race, ethnicity, and spoken and written language be collected in your health records. This data should also be integrated into your organization's management information systems and periodically updated. The data facilitates appointments as well as future communication with members.

## Remember, your compliance with Title VI and the CLAS Standards is not only mandatory; it is also beneficial to you and your staff.

Your compliance gives you the opportunity to personalize your plan of treatment for each member. This personalization decreases the chance of misdiagnosis and unnecessary testing.

For additional information on Title VI or the CLAS Standards, including how to coordinate a free training session, please contact the Plan's Cultural and Linguistic Services Program at (502) 585-7932 or by e-mail at [cals@amerihealthmercy.org](mailto:cals@amerihealthmercy.org).