

# Resource Booklet for PBH Providers

## Offering Services to Individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP)



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## RESOURCES

### MINORITIES

#### **Catholic Social Services Refugee Resettlement Office**

1123 South Church Street  
Charlotte, NC 28203  
Phone: 704-370-3277  
Email: [ceponce@chalottediocese.org](mailto:ceponce@chalottediocese.org)  
<http://www.cssnc.org/refugee.html>

**International House** – Their mission is to promote international understanding by serving as a center for diversity, advocating for people of diverse national backgrounds and facilitating professional and cultural programs.

322 Hawthorne Lane,  
Charlotte, NC 28209  
704-333-8099  
E-mail: [info@ihclt.org](mailto:info@ihclt.org)  
Website: [www.ihclt.org](http://www.ihclt.org)

**Office of Minority Health** – promotes and advocates for the elimination of health disparities among all racial and ethnic minorities and other underserved populations in North Carolina.

1110 Navaho Drive, Suite 510  
Raleigh, NC, 27699  
Phone: (919) 431 – 1613  
Email: [omhhd@ncmail.net](mailto:omhhd@ncmail.net)  
Website: [http:// www. Ncminorityhealth. Org](http://www.Ncminorityhealth.Org)

### BLIND

**Metrolina Association for the Blind** (Cabarrus and Union Counties) – assists its clients in learning new skills and alternative ways of accomplishing everyday tasks

704 Louise Avenue  
Charlotte, NC, 28204  
Phone : (704) 372 – 3870  
Email : [rscheffel@mabnc.org](mailto:rscheffel@mabnc.org)  
Website: <http://www.Mabnc.Org>

**NC Division of Services for the Blind** – enables people who are blind or visually impaired to reach their goals of independence and employment. For a small fee, they transcribe material from print to Braille. For information on transcription, contact Susan Barnes at the Communications Unit 919-715-2436 ext. 208.

[http:// www. Dhhs. State. Nc. Us/ dsb](http://www.Dhhs.State.Nc.Us/dsb)

Charlotte District Office of Services for the Blind  
(Cabarrus, Rowan, Stanly & Union Counties)  
5855 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100  
Charlotte, NC, 28212  
Phone: (704) 563 – 4168  
Email: [eddie.everett@ncmail.net](mailto:eddie.everett@ncmail.net)

Winston-Salem District Office of Services for the Blind (Davidson County)  
4265 Brownsboro Road  
Winston-Salem, NC, 27106  
Phone: (800) 422 – 0373  
Email: [sheryl.dotson@ncmail.net](mailto:sheryl.dotson@ncmail.net)

#### **NC Lions Foundation –**

helps with eye glasses and white canes  
7050 Camp Dogwood Drive  
Sherrills Ford, NC, 28673  
Phone: (800) 662 – 7401  
Email : [steve@nclf.org](mailto:steve@nclf.org)  
[http:// www. Nclf. Org/](http://www.Nclf.Org/)

### DEAF/HARD OF HEARING

**Carolina Children’s Communicative Disorders Program** (CCCDP) provides devices and services to underprivileged children with communication disorders. NC Neurosciences Hospital  
CB#7070 Neurosciences Hospital  
UNC-Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, NC, 27514  
Phone: (919) 419 – 1428  
[http:// www.unchealthcare.org](http://www.unchealthcare.org)

**Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** – Seven regional centers help families deal with hearing loss; and ensure access to appropriate evaluation, counseling, communication and educational services.

Website: [http:// www. Ncdhhs. Gov/ dsdhh](http://www.Ncdhhs.Gov/dsdhh)

Charlotte Regional Center – Cabarrus, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties  
5501 Executive Center Drive, Suite 101  
Charlotte, NC, 28212 [Map](#)  
Phone: (704) 568 – 8558  
Email: [Linda.Linfors@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Linda.Linfors@dhhs.nc.gov)

Greensboro Regional Center – Davidson County  
122 North Elm Street, Suite 900  
Greensboro, NC, 27401  
Phone: (336) 218 – 6625 Ext: VP  
Email: [Susanna.Bourgeois@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Susanna.Bourgeois@dhhs.nc.gov)

**HEAR NOW, Hearing Aid Program** – provides hearing aids to adults and children who are permanent residents of the US and have very limited financial resources.  
6700 Washington Avenue South  
Eden Prairie, MN, 55344  
Phone: (800) 648 – 4327  
Email: [joanita@sotheworldmayhear.org](mailto:joanita@sotheworldmayhear.org)  
<http://www.Sotheworldmayhear.Org/forms/hearnow.Php>

**Journey to Wellness** – serves the mental health needs of deaf, hard-of-hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind clients and their spouse and families. Their main office is in Charlotte, however, home and community visits can be arranged.  
One University Place  
8801 JM Keynes Dr, Ste 405, Charlotte, NC 28262  
Phone: 704-926-5050 (Voice), 704-927-0481 (TTY)  
<http://www.JourneyMH.com>

**National Association of the Deaf Law and Advocacy Center** – promotes, protects, and preserves the rights and quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the US.  
8630 Fenton St, Ste 820, Sliver Spring, MC 20910  
Phone: (301) 587 – 1788  
Email: [NADlaw@nad.org](mailto:NADlaw@nad.org)  
<http://www.Nad.Org>

**NC Association of the Deaf** – promotes the educational, socioeconomic, health and civil rights, welfare of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind citizens of North Carolina.  
President – Linda Nelson of Cary, NC  
[lknelson2@msn.com](mailto:lknelson2@msn.com)  
<http://www.ncadeaf.org>

**NC Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (NCTEDP)**  
Thomas Kuszaj, NCTEDP Coordinator  
1100 Navaho Drive  
Woodoak Bldg., GL-3  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
1-800-999-5737 (toll free V/TTY)  
Email: [Thomas.kuszaj@ncmail.net](mailto:Thomas.kuszaj@ncmail.net)  
<http://www.relaync.com>

**NC Lions Foundation Hearing Aid Program** – helps with eye glasses and hearing aids. Client must go through the local chapter first for this assistance.  
7050 Camp Dogwood Drive  
Sherrills Ford, NC, 28673  
Phone: (800) 662 – 7401  
Email: [steve@ncif.org](mailto:steve@ncif.org)  
<http://www.Nclf.Org/>

**Preferred Alternatives, Inc.** – provides supported employment services for the deaf and hard of hearing  
1129 South Main Street, Suite 103  
High Point, NC 27262  
Voice/Text: 336-870-7949  
Email: [dhadmin@paimail.org](mailto:dhadmin@paimail.org)  
<http://www.paidhdh.com>

### **FEDERAL WEBSITE**

**Limited English Proficiency: A Federal Interagency Website (LEP.gov)**- This site acts as a clearinghouse, providing and linking to information, tools, and technical assistance regarding limited English proficiency and language services for federal agencies, recipients of federal funds, users of federal programs and federally assisted programs, and other stakeholders.  
[www.lep.gov](http://www.lep.gov)

### **HISPANIC**

**Casa Guadalupe** of Catholic Social Services – North East Region – Provides direct services to the Hispanic/Latino community  
621 W. Second Street  
Winston Salem, NC, 27101  
Phone: (336) 727 – 4745  
Email: [lcreyna@charlottediocese.org](mailto:lcreyna@charlottediocese.org)  
<http://www.cssnc.org>

**El Pueblo, Inc.** – advocacy organization for Latino issues.  
4 N Blount Street, Suite 200  
Raleigh, NC, 27601  
Phone: (919) 835 – 1525  
<http://elpueblo.Org/>

**Hispanic Center** – outreach organization that serves the Hispanic community  
1505 East Kivett Dr.  
High Point, NC, 27260  
Phone: (336) 884 – 0244

**Hispanic Learning Center** – after school ESL (English as a Second Language) literacy program. Also provide community outreach and information to the Latino community of Cabarrus County.  
418 Kerr Street NW  
Concord, NC 28025-4651  
Phone: (704) 795-3535  
email: [d\\_goedeke@yahoo.com](mailto:d_goedeke@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.thehlc.org>

**Latin-American Coalition** – provide education, information and referral for Latino families including short-term case management, job bank, small business development, first-time home buyers

program, labor and consumer rights advocacy, immigration services, and citizenship classes.  
4938 Central Ave  
Charlotte, NC 28205-5871  
Phone: (704) 531-3848  
email: [info@latinamericancoalition.org](mailto:info@latinamericancoalition.org)  
[www.latinamericancoalition.org](http://www.latinamericancoalition.org)

**Mi Casa Su Casa Center** – provide pre-natal programs, programs for new mothers, food distribution, family preservation programs, and English and Spanish classes  
6030 Albemarle Rd  
Charlotte, NC 28212-3787  
Phone : (704) 536-9845  
<http://www.micasasucasacr.org>

**Our Lady of Guadalupe** – Makes referrals for food, medical and clothing assistance as funds permit.  
6212 Tuckaseegee Road  
Charlotte, NC, 28214  
Phone: (336) 391 – 3732  
Email: [OLGCharlotte@charlottediocese.org](mailto:OLGCharlotte@charlottediocese.org)  
[http:// www. Charlottediocese.org](http://www.Charlottediocese.org)

**Project Esperanza** – Legal Aid of North Carolina, Inc. (Administration) – Provides legal services to battered Hispanics and Latinos  
224 South Dawson Street  
Raleigh, NC, 27611  
Phone: (919) 856 – 2142  
[http:// www. Legalaidnc. Org](http://www.Legalaidnc.Org)

**Union County Latino Task Force**  
United Way of the Central Carolinas – Union Co.  
102 East Franklin Street  
Monroe, NC 28112  
Gustavo Arévalo, Latino Outreach Specialist  
Phone: 704-226-5124  
E-mail [garevalo@uwcentralcarolinas.org](mailto:garevalo@uwcentralcarolinas.org)  
[www.uwcentralcarolinas.org](http://www.uwcentralcarolinas.org)

### **INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS**

**American Translators Association (ATA)** – a professional association founded to advance the translation and interpreting professions and foster the professional development of individual translators and interpreters. Find a translator or interpreter using their searchable online directory of translator and interpreter services.  
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Telephone +1-703- 683-6100  
[www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)

**Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI)** – serves North and South Carolina as a Chapter of the American Translators Association (ATA). You can use their online database to search for a translator, interpreter or language services company. Built-in tools let you refine your search by location or qualification.  
Heather Hille, Administrative Manager  
[catiadmin@catiweb.org](mailto:catiadmin@catiweb.org)  
Tel: (919) 698-0721  
[www.catiweb.org](http://www.catiweb.org)

**Choice Translating** –has a global network providing communication solutions in 176 languages. They provide translation, interpretation, global brand evaluation and tagline localization.  
U.S. HEADQUARTERS – Choice Translating, Inc.  
Tryon Plaza, 112 South Tryon Street, Suite 1500  
Charlotte, NC 28284  
Toll Free: 1.888.721.2077  
Tel: 704.717.0043  
E-mail: [moreinfo@choicetranslating.com](mailto:moreinfo@choicetranslating.com)  
[www.choicetranslating.com](http://www.choicetranslating.com)

**Fluent Language Solutions** – offer a variety of comprehensive interpreting and translating services, including: foreign language translating and interpreting services, American Sign Language interpreting, telephone and video remote interpreting, document and web translating.  
Mailing Address:  
PO Box 563308, Charlotte, NC 28256-3308  
Physical Address:  
8801 J.M. Keynes Dr. Ste 400  
Charlotte, NC 28262-6406  
Phone: 704.532.7446  
E-mail [info@fluentls.com](mailto:info@fluentls.com).  
[www.fluentls.com](http://www.fluentls.com)

### **INFORMATION ON PROVIDING LANGUAGE ACCESS IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS**

**Diversity RX** – Promotes language and cultural competence to improve the quality of health care communities. Their website contains: networking opportunities with colleagues and experts, research findings on language and cultural competence in health care, and information on designing better programs and policies. For minority, immigrant, and ethnically diverse  
[www.diversityrx.org](http://www.diversityrx.org)

**Hablamos Juntos** – Dedicated to improving patient-provider communication for Latinos. It is a national program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.  
[www.hablamosjuntos.org](http://www.hablamosjuntos.org)

**International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA)** – committed to equal access to quality health care for all people and to the advancement of professional medical interpreting.  
[www.imiaweb.org](http://www.imiaweb.org)

**National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare** – is a multidisciplinary organization based in the United States whose mission is to promote culturally competent professional health care interpreting as a means to support equal access to health care for individuals with limited English proficiency.  
[www.ncihc.org](http://www.ncihc.org)

### **LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

**Language Identification Flashcard (PDF)** – From the Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, the “I Speak” Language Identification Flashcard is written in 38 languages and can be used to identify the language spoken by an individual accessing services provided by federally assisted programs or activities.  
[www.lep.gov/resources/ISpeakCards2004.pdf](http://www.lep.gov/resources/ISpeakCards2004.pdf)

### **LANGUAGE TRAINING AND INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS**

**American Translators Association Certification Program** – ATA has established a certification program to enable individual translators to demonstrate that they meet professional standards. Translators who pass a written examination are certified by ATA in a specific language pair and direction (from or into English).  
[www.atanet.org/certification/index.php](http://www.atanet.org/certification/index.php)

**Charlotte Area Health Education Center (Charlotte AHEC)** – The Charlotte AHEC Diversity team provides educational and training programs that help our community and its immigrants bridge the barriers of language and culture. They provide education in cultural competence, interpreting, translating and Spanish.  
PO Box 32861  
Charlotte, NC 28232  
Phone: 704.512.6523  
[www.clahecc.org](http://www.clahecc.org)

**The Language Academy of the Carolinas, Inc.** – Offer a wide range of high quality services to fit both business and personal needs, including Spanish classes for children and adults, on-site Spanish training for businesses, Mandarin Chinese classes, French classes, English classes, Italian classes, Russian classes, as well as translation and interpreting services.

2110 Ben Craig Drive, Suite 200  
Charlotte, NC 28262  
Phone: 704.548.0048  
[www.carolinalanguage.com](http://www.carolinalanguage.com)

**Community Colleges – Davidson Community College**  
Community Spanish Interpreter Program  
Suzanne Ward, Faculty  
E-mail: [smward@davidsonccc.edu](mailto:smward@davidsonccc.edu)  
Phone: 336.249.8186, ext. 6208  
297 DCCC Road  
Lexington, NC, 27293  
<http://www.davidsonccc.edu/>

**Rowan-Cabarrus Community College**  
Conversational Spanish Classes  
Jan Corriher-Smith  
E-mail: [corriherj@rowancabarrus.edu](mailto:corriherj@rowancabarrus.edu)  
Phone: 704-216-3514  
1333 Jake Alexander Boulevard  
Salisbury, NC, 28145  
Website: <http://www.Rowancabarrus.Edu>

**South Piedmont Community College**  
Spanish Language Instruction  
Old Charlotte Highway Campus  
4209 Old Charlotte Highway, Monroe  
Phone: 704-290-5100  
<http://www.spcc.edu>

**Stanly Community College, Albemarle** –  
Conversational Spanish, American Sign Language  
141 College Drive, Albemarle, NC, 28001  
Phone: (704) 982 – 0121  
Website: <http://www.Stanly.Edu>

### **OTHER HELPFUL WEBSITES**

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** – dedicated to protecting health and promoting quality of life through the prevention and control of disease, injury, and disability. The CDC has a website in Spanish.  
[www.cdc.gov/spanish/](http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/)

**Google Translate** – Although it is never a good idea to use a computer program to translate an entire document, it is OK to use one to translate a phrase or a word or two. One of the better translating programs can be found on Google.  
<http://translate.google.com>

**Medline Plus** – brings together information from the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other government agencies and health-related organizations. The website also gives access to health information in 47 languages.  
[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/languages/language\\_s.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/languages/language_s.html)

**NccareLink** – This website provides up-to-date information about programs and services across North Carolina for families, seniors, youths and everyone in-between. Resources for Hispanics or Spanish-only speakers can be found by using the keyword search tool.  
[www.nccarelink.gov](http://www.nccarelink.gov)

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA)** – has the vision of “a life in the community for everyone.” All of its programs, policies and grants are geared toward that outcome. SAMHSA has a website in Spanish.  
[www.samhsa.gov/espanol/](http://www.samhsa.gov/espanol/)  
SAMHSA also has a multi-language initiative which adapts publications for clients and the general public whose first language is not English.  
[www.kap.samhsa.gov/mli/index.htm](http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/mli/index.htm)

#### **VARIOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURES**

**Alliance Française de Charlotte** – offer cultural and social events and French classes.  
P.O. Box 220106  
Charlotte, NC 28222-0106  
Phone : 704-341-0080  
e-mail : [info@afcharlotte.org](mailto:info@afcharlotte.org) /  
[classes@afcharlotte.org](mailto:classes@afcharlotte.org)  
<http://www.afcharlotte.org>

**Great Wall School of Education** – simplified Mandarin Chinese Language instruction  
Mail: PO Box 364, Cornelius, NC 28031  
Class Location: Huntersville Presbyterian Church, 201 S Old Statesville Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078  
Phone: 704-728-2679  
[principal@charlottechineseschool.org](mailto:principal@charlottechineseschool.org)  
<http://charlottechineseschool.org>

**Metrolina Native American Association Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program** – serves low income, unemployed and underemployed Native Americans residing in ten surrounding counties (Cabarrus, Catawba,

Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, and Union)  
8001 N. Tryon St. Charlotte, N.C. 28262  
ph: 704-926-1524  
[Metrolinanatives@yahoo.com](mailto:Metrolinanatives@yahoo.com)  
<http://metrolinanativeamericans.com/>

**Philippine American Association of NC, Inc.**  
Enhances friendship among Philippine-American families in NC as well as provide assistance in humanitarian efforts both locally and in the Philippines.  
1309 Spring Forest Road  
Raleigh, NC 27615  
Co-Chairs:  
Ansell Neri [ansell.neri@gmail.com](mailto:ansell.neri@gmail.com)  
Aurora Sprague [mstar46@hotmail.com](mailto:mstar46@hotmail.com)  
<http://www.paanc.org/about.html>

**For additional language access resources, please visit the provider section at [www.pbhsolutions.org](http://www.pbhsolutions.org)**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

(Condensed from the Limited English Proficiency  
Federal Interagency Website – [www.lep.gov](http://www.lep.gov))

### **Who is a Limited English Proficient (LEP) individual?**

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or “LEP.” These individuals may be entitled language assistance with respect to a particular type or service, benefit, or encounter.

### **What are the relevant laws concerning language access for LEP individuals?**

Federal laws particularly applicable to language access include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Title VI regulations, prohibiting discrimination based on national origin, and Executive Order 13166 issued in 2000. Many individual federal programs, states, and localities also have provisions requiring language services for LEP individuals.

### **What are recipients and sub-recipients of federal funds required to do to meet LEP requirements?**

They are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons. The following four factors must be considered:

1. the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or agency;
2. the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program or agency;
3. the nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the agency to people’s lives; and
4. the resources available to the agency, along with the costs of providing language access services.

The intent is to find a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on small business, or small nonprofits.

### **How do we determine which documents must be translated?**

It would be impossible, from a practical and cost-based perspective, to translate every piece of outreach material into every language. It is important to ensure that written materials routinely provided in English also are provided in regularly encountered languages other than English. It is particularly important to ensure that **vital documents** are translated into the non-English language of each regularly encountered LEP group eligible to be served or likely to be affected by the program or activity. A document will be considered vital if it **contains information that is critical for obtaining federal services and/or benefits, or is required by law**. Vital documents include, for example: applications, consent and complaint forms; notices of rights and disciplinary action; notices advising LEP persons of the availability of free language assistance; prison rulebooks; written tests that do not assess English language competency, but rather competency for a particular license, job, or skill for which English competency is not required; and letters or notices that require a response from the beneficiary or client.

## **What is the difference between a bilingual staff person and an interpreter or translator?**

People who are completely **bilingual** are fluent in two languages. They are able to conduct the business of the workplace in either of those languages. For instance, 911 call centers and a variety of hotlines frequently employ bilingual operators who can communicate directly with LEP callers in a particular language. Bilingual staff must be fluent in the non-English language, including fluency in agency terminology. Such fluency should be assessed prior to relying on the bilingual employee for the provision of services. Many individuals have some proficiency in more than one language, but are not completely bilingual. They may be able to greet a limited English proficient individual in his or her language, but not conduct agency business in that language. The distinction is critical in order to ensure meaningful communication and appropriate allocation of resources.

An **interpreter** conveys meaning orally, while a **translator** conveys meaning from written text to written text. As a result, interpretation requires skills different from those needed for translation. Those utilizing the services of interpreters and translators should request information about certification, assessments taken, qualifications, experience, and training. If bilingual staff is asked to interpret or translate, they should be qualified to do so. Assessment of ability, training on interpreter ethics and standards, and clear policies that delineate appropriate use of bilingual staff, staff or contract interpreters and translators, will help ensure quality and effective use of resources.

## **STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE**

(From Diversity Rx – [www.diversityrx.org](http://www.diversityrx.org))

Health care organizations use a wide spectrum of strategies for overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers to care. Certain strategies may work best in a particular health care setting, while others have wide application and can be useful in all settings. These strategies include the use of: 1) bilingual/bicultural staff, 2) bilingual/bicultural community health workers, 3) employee language banks, 4) professional interpreters, and 5) translated written materials.

### **1. Bilingual/Bicultural staff**

Hiring bilingual staff who can communicate directly with patients without need of an interpreter is clearly the most efficient approach for dealing with language barriers.

One area of concern in employing bilingual providers and other staff is that their language skills and cultural awareness are rarely evaluated. Non-native speakers often have an inaccurate understanding of their level of fluency. While native speakers are generally proficient in the target language, problems can also arise. The dialect may be inappropriate, socio-cultural differences may interfere with good communication, and medical terminology in the target language may be lacking. Evaluation of a staff person's linguistic skills and cultural awareness would help to address this issue

Another problem with hiring bilingual staff is the lack of trained health care professionals who are bilingual / bicultural. Recruiting for bilingual positions can be challenging, even for widely spoken languages such as Spanish. There are creative ways to overcome this gap. For example, foreign-trained health care workers can be retrained and utilized in professional or paraprofessional roles. Special programs can assist them to become certified or licensed in their original profession, or can train them for other health care roles, such as physician assistant or community health worker. Yet another approach to overcoming the language barrier is to encourage bilingual/bicultural young people to enter the healthcare field.

### **2. Bilingual/Bicultural Community Health Workers**

By hiring staff who reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the community, community health worker programs connect mainstream health care institutions with communities that have often lacked access to adequate care. Community health workers improve the quality of health care services in several ways: facilitating access through outreach and health promotion activities; facilitating community participation in the health care system and educating providers about cultural relevance; and contributing to the continuity, coordination, and overall quality of care as members of a comprehensive health care team. It should be stressed that to be most effective, community health worker programs must provide training and on-going support to their staff, who often work alone or in isolation from their colleagues and the mainstream agency.

### **3. Employee Language Banks**

The in-house language bank is one of the oldest strategies for dealing with language barriers in health institutions, especially hospitals. This strategy utilizes employees who speak other languages as volunteer interpreters when needed. One advantage is its apparent low cost since no extra staff needs to be hired; another is that the language bank interpreter may be readily available and on-site for emergency requests.

However, problems with this approach are rampant unless the language bank program is carefully designed and organized. Usually no formal evaluation of language skills has occurred, with employees self-assessing their level of fluency. Also, few employees have received any training in medical interpreting skills, ethics, or vocabulary. Job conflicts can also arise when “volunteer” interpreters are called away from their regular duties.

Some institutions are doing a good job of improving the quality of language banks by formalizing their structure: assigning a coordinator to assess language and interpretation skills of employees, maintaining updated lists of bilingual employees, providing interpreter training, and assessing the quality of service provided. These institutions have also found it useful to include interpretation as a listed job duty, to enlist the support and cooperation of supervisors, and to provide compensation for bilingual skills as a bonus or differential. Institutions with large numbers of limited-English speaking patients may find the language bank an effective back-up to other strategies when managed properly.

#### **4. Professional Interpreters**

When bilingual providers are not available to care for monolingual patients, well-trained interpreters can do much to bridge the language and culture gaps.

The cost of using professional interpreters is often cited as a barrier to using this strategy. What often is not examined is the cost of using untrained or ad hoc interpreters (family, friends, and other patients). Potential liability costs, the cost of poorer health care due to inadequate communications, and undesired health outcomes may be more expensive than providing well-trained interpreters. Also confidentiality is compromised, vital information may be censored and internal family dynamics jeopardized.

A variety of hiring approaches are currently used to obtain professional interpreter services:

- a. Interpreters are hired as full-time or part-time regular employees – most common where need for a particular language is high.
- b. Interpreters are hired as hourly, on-call employees or as independent contractors – most useful where demand for a particular language is intermittent. This also works best where most of demand is for pre-scheduled appointments, although emergency needs can be met when interpreters carry pagers and are accessible 24 hours a day.
- c. In-person interpreter services are obtained through an outside agency. This agency may specialize in medical interpreting or provide a spectrum of interpretation specialties. Use of an outside agency works well where need is intermittent and diverse, and can also supplement an organization's regular interpretation staff.
- d. Telephone interpretation – also known as remote consecutive interpretation – can be obtained through outside agencies that specialize in this service. Often hospitals use such services for emergencies when it will take too long to get an interpreter in-person or for rare languages where a local interpreter is not available. Telephone interpretation may also be used for simple communications, such as setting up appointments, giving lab results, etc. – the many normal functions that are conducted by phone with English-speaking patients. More complex communications are best left to in-person interpretation services, where non-verbal cues are an important part of the communication process and accuracy of the interpretation is critical.

## **5. Translated Written Materials**

Materials which place English alongside the target language are sometimes used to communicate with non-English speaking patients. Providers and patients then communicate by pointing to the appropriate phrase in their language. This method is obviously limited in usefulness and also requires patients to be literate in their native language. It is most often used in emergencies in the absence of a readily available interpreter, or for simple needs a patient might have. It can also be useful for receptionists trying to identify the language of a patient before requesting an interpreter.

Translated forms, documents, and health education materials play a role in increasing access to service. Many agencies have developed a variety of translated materials. These can be useful with some populations if tailored to the reading level of the audience and adapted and tested for cultural appropriateness. Protocols for translating materials need to be standardized and clearinghouses developed to aid in the dissemination of appropriate and effective materials.

## **6. Other Materials and Methods**

Videos/DVDs in other languages or with subtitles in other languages can be helpful to communicate information to patients or their family members.

Answering machines with an option in another language can allow patients to leave their message in their own language. An interpreter can then check the messages and return the phone call.