

## **The Role of Non-Clinical Personnel in the Provision of Services that are Culturally Competent, Linguistically Appropriate, and Easily Understandable**

### Organizational Leadership

- The commitment of the leadership of the organization is essential.
- Leadership and management must set policies that support the provision of services that are understandable to patients with limited health literacy and appropriate for culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

### Registration/Admitting Personnel

- The patient's experience is strongly affected by the communication skills of the registration/admitting personnel - they can make the patient feel welcomed or offended. Patients who are uncomfortable with the registration/admitting personnel, may choose not to seek services in the future.
- The registration/admitting personnel must be trained to ensure that patients are comfortable; they must ask questions in an appropriate manner and must note if the patient appears to be confused.

### Information Technology Staff

- The IT personnel must establish data systems to collect information on the patients' language, culture, literacy. This information should be included in the patient's chart and there ideally should be a way to track whether the patient received the necessary services (eg. interpreter services or special instructions).
- IT personnel can track quality of care data defined as patient satisfaction, no-show rates, hospital admissions, changes in health-related behaviors, etc. and this data can be stratified based on race, ethnicity, language, and literacy. This is the only way for an institution to measure and compare the impact of its services on a diverse population groups.

### Human Resource Personnel

- Studies show that patients may be more comfortable with a provider that is similar to them racially and ethnically, and therefore more likely to comply with medical advice. Human Resource personnel are key to the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce



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- Racial and ethnic diversity in the workplace is a strength, but at the same time, can impede trust and communication. Human Resource personnel should provide employee training to support effective teamwork. Employees should be taught to recognize and *manage their prejudices*.

## Managing Interpreter Services

- Providing services in the patient's language is required by federal law as well as regulatory bodies such as the Joint Commission. Health care organizations must have management staff who ensure that interpreter services are provided, either by trained and tested dual-role bilingual staff (who have other jobs) or by professional interpreters.
- The use of interpreters must be documented.

## Community Relations

- Research shows that patients are more likely to seek preventive services and more likely to comply with medical advice when there are partnership relationships between the organization and the community. Personnel who act as liaisons to the community are essential.
- Staff throughout the organization should be trained to respect the role of community liaisons.

## **References**

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