COMMUNICATION WITH INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE LOW ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP)

POLICY

Washington County Department of Health and Human Services is committed to ensuring that information is communicated in ways that are sensitive to the needs and requirements of clients from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

PROCEDURE

Departmental staff will:

1. Ensure that signage is posted in all clinic sites and on the department's website promoting no cost language resources that are available to all clients seeking services.

2. Inquire whether the client will need an interpreter in order to gain a full understanding of the services to be provided.

3. Offer the services, at no cost to the client, of a qualified interpreter to convey health information.

4. It is inappropriate for clients to use family members and/or friends for interpretation purposes in any of the clinic's settings. Staff will strongly encourage the use of a qualified interpreter as needed.

5. Determine the specific language skills needed for the client and determine whether department staffs are able to assist or if outside resources are needed.

6. Maintain a current list of available language resources approved by the Washington County Department of Health and Human Services.

7. Notify the appropriate program staff person to make outside arrangements if necessary. If no approved agency or individual is able to handle the situation, discuss with program supervisor. It is possible to arrange service agreements with other agencies.

8. The program staff person must instruct the interpreter to inform clients of the following:
   a. All materials requiring signature and/or consent must be fully explained to the client.
   b. A client must be informed of his/her rights and the department's grievance procedure at the time of intake.
   c. A client must be informed of other services available within the service system.

9. The program supervisor is responsible to review the submitted interpreter bill to ensure the signature of the interpreter and the charges for the date and hours worked are correct.

10. The supervisor will initial the request for reimbursement and identify the expenditure in the program budget.

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