IMPLEMENTING INTERPRETING SERVICES

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 MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Understand Current Reality

- Where is your hospital/clinic located?
- Does your hospital/clinic attract immigrant populations?
- Does your hospital/clinic receive patients from the immigrant population?
- Does your hospital/clinic understand about language barrier issues?
- Does your hospital/clinic have a budget allocated to deal with language barrier issues?
- What has the hospital/clinic done to address the issue of language barriers?
MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Do A Needs Assessment

- Gather supporting data such as:
  - Number of immigrants in your city/town
  - Number of ethnic minority groups represented in your city/town
  - Number of immigrants receiving care at your hospital/clinic
  - Languages represented by the immigrant population
  - Number of times immigrants with no knowledge of the local language come to the hospital to receive care (monthly, yearly)
Evaluate the drawback of NOT offering language services in the hospital/clinic

- Human issues:
  - Patients will have limited access to healthcare services
  - Patients will not understand their health issues
  - Patients will not know about follow up care needed
  - Patients will receive inequality of care
  - Patients will have to wait longer to be treated
  - Patients will have to rely on ad-hoc interpreters such as children, family members or friends to help them communicate
  - Clinical staff can possibly give them the wrong diagnosis
Evaluate the drawback of NOT offering language services in the hospital/clinic

- Cost issues:
  - Unnecessary visits
  - Missed appointments
  - Unnecessary diagnostic tests
  - Complications due to non-compliance
  - Lengthy visits
Evaluate the advantages of offering language services in the hospital/clinic

- Human advantages:
  - Better customer service
  - Increase quality of care
  - Increase equality of care
  - Increase awareness about their care
  - Empower immigrant population to control their care
  - Increase access to health services
Evaluate the advantages of offering language services in the hospital/clinic

Cost effectiveness
- Reduce the number of unnecessary visits
- Reduce the number of unnecessary diagnostic tests
- Reduce the number of no-show to tests and procedures
- Enhance good communication to achieve reduced length of time for patients appointments
In the United States having services available is not only the right thing to do but it is the law at the federal, state and local levels.

Example of some of the laws that support language services in the United States:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Medicaid law and related regulations
- The Hill-Burton Act
- The Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act
- Tort Liability
- State Laws

Reference: Find a summary of the Laws at the www.diversityrx.org
COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- Evaluate hospital culture to decide which department is appropriate to manage language services?
  - Patient care department?
  - Social Services/Social Issues department?
  - Community issues department?
  - Equality of care/Diversity department?
  - Clinical staff department?

Note: Each hospital or clinic in the United States has language services organized under the department that best fits their institutional culture.
COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- Develop systems to organize service delivery
  - Centralize services through the department to:
    - Maintain cost control
    - Track need for services and volume increase for sustainability
    - Ensure quality of services
    - Ensure access to services
    - Ensure implementation of services
  - Develop a job description for the coordinator
  - Assign a coordinator or add the coordination responsibility to a staff member of the department in charge of language services

Note: Most of the hospital/clinics in the United States have centralized services to be able to track cost and volume increase.
COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- Develop systems to organize service delivery
  - Find ways to capture patients preferred language while in the hospital either manually or electronically
  - Create a scheduling system, either manually or electronically, to better organize the need and to ensure service delivery
  - Create a method to be able to document need and volume increase to be able to forecast need for more staff or more languages that needed to be added
  - Keep track of services rendered for payment of resource used to deliver the service
RESOURCES TO DELIVER SERVICES

- Decide on the resources to be used to deliver services needed
- Evaluate each resource for cost effectiveness and quality
- Evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of each resource
- Verify with hospital administration regarding ability to pay resources or to contract out with agencies
RESOURCE TO DELIVER SERVICES

- Options of resources:
  - Hire staff interpreters to cover the top language need
  - Hire freelance/contractor interpreters for other languages need
  - Coordinate with bi-lingual hospital staff with knowledge about interpreting to step in as needed
  - Contract with an outside agency for face to face interpretation
  - Contract with an outside agency for telephone interpretation
  - Add the interpreting responsibility to the cultural mediator (if you have this model at your hospital/clinic). Training will be needed.
RESOURCE TO DELIVER SERVICES

- Develop for the interpreter:
  - Job description that will fit the hospital/clinic policies
  - Working guidelines and policies

- Salaries depend on:
  - Market/location
  - Hospital/clinic salary structure
  - Candidates’ experience

(Salaries may be comparable to those in Allied Health professions)

**Note:** Across United States Medical Interpreters salaries vary.
SKILLS ASSESSMENT/TRAINING

- Create evaluation tools to evaluate:
  - Knowledge of medical terminology
  - Knowledge of basic anatomy and physiology
  - Ability to write simple instructions
  - Ability to retain information and deliver it accurately
  - Ability to take notes while listening and deliver the information accurately

Note: Currently in the United States there is no certification/license for interpreters therefore each hospital/clinic has the responsibility to create their own way to evaluate their interpreters.
SKILLS ASSESSMENT/TRAINING

- Develop training sessions for interpreters
  - Use nurses or doctors to deliver presentations about different clinical areas
  - Review working standards for the hospital/clinic
  - Review policies that need to be followed
  - Review how documentation needs to be tracked
  - Review interpreting standards

Note: Across United States there are Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics that serve as a guide for interpreters on how to do their job.
SKILLS ASSESSMENT/TRAINING

- Develop training sessions for clinical staff to learn:
  
  - How to access interpreting services
  - How to work with the interpreters
  - The importance of communicating with their non-local language speaking patients through an interpreter
  - Advantages of working with an interpreter
Once most of the services are in place:

- Develop informational materials for clinical staff on how to access services and how to work with interpreters
- Develop informational materials for patients to learn how to access services
- Develop materials for patients to identify their preferred language to staff while in the hospital
MARKETING/SERVICE EVALUATION

- Conduct a survey of clinical staff
- Conduct a survey of patients
  - Evaluate:
    - Staff/patient awareness of the language services
    - Staff/patient satisfaction with language services
    - Staff/patient perception of improvements that need to happen within the language services department
References

- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)
  - www.omhrc.gov/clas
- Diversity RX
  - www.diversityrx.com
- Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations
  - www.jcaho.org
- Let Everyone Participate
  - www.lep.gov
- Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (MMIA)
  - www.mmia.org
- National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare
  - www.ncihc.org
- Queensland Government – Multicultural Health
- The Critical Link
  - http://www.criticallink.org
- United States Department of Health and Human Services
  - www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/