

Meeting Summary for Committee on Diversity, Inclusion & Equity in Behavioral Health Zoom Meeting

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Quick recap

The team discussed the importance of language translation in virtual meetings, with a focus on the role of interpreters in healthcare and the Affordable Care Act's Section 1557. Carlos Blanco, a bilingual interpreter, shared his insights on language access plans, the differences between translation and interpretation services, and the need for training staff in interpretation and translation procedures. The team also explored potential issues with third-party interpreter services, the use of AI in translation, and the importance of providing language information to agencies receiving federal or state funding.

Next steps

Carlos will send the latest regulations on interpreter services to the team.

Brenetta Henry will consider inviting DSS to the next meeting to discuss disseminating language services information to families.

Shayna will explore the possibility of using Language Link for training purposes on DSS-specific language.

Summary

Late Arrival and Open Introduction

Co-Chairs Alice Forrester and Brenetta Henry welcomed attendees and indicated that the meeting was to be covered by CT-N.

Zoom Experiences and Language Translation Challenges

Team members shared their personal experiences with Zoom and discussed ways to make virtual meetings more human, with a focus on the challenges of language translation and the importance of understanding and empathy. Carlos presented on translation and interpretation services, while Alice hinted at future discussions about implementing social workers and providers. New members were warmly welcomed, and key leaders introduced themselves, including Alice, the CEO of Clifford Beers Community Health Partners, and Johanna Cifuentes, Vice President of Trauma-Informed Anti-Racism Practices.

Language Access Plans and Interpreter Role in Healthcare

Carlos, a bilingual interpreter with 22 years of experience in Connecticut, shared his insights on language access plans and the role of interpreters in healthcare. He highlighted the importance of the 13 class standards, specifically focusing on class standards 5, 6, 7, and 8 that relate to language. Carlos also discussed the Affordable Care Act and its relevance to language access, promising to send further information on this topic. He concluded by emphasizing the crucial role of interpreters in ensuring culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Language Assistance Services and Interpretation Protocols

Carlos discussed the Affordable Care Act's Section 1557, which requires healthcare agencies to provide language assistance services to all patients regardless of their English proficiency. He explained the differences between translation and interpretation services, emphasizing that interpretation must be free, of high quality, and follow established protocols. He further

detailed the three types of interpretation: consecutive, simultaneous, and site translation, and cautioned against direct communication between interpreter and patient without following protocols. Carlos highlighted the importance of training staff in interpretation and translation procedures.

Language Sensitivity and Interpreter Roles in Healthcare

Carlos underscored the significance of considering language differences when communicating with Spanish speakers in medical settings. He clarified potential misunderstandings with the term "LaCasa Roja" and advocated for the role of interpreters as patient advocates. He distinguished between modes of interpretation and stressed the importance of face-to-face communication for complex medical issues. Carlos further emphasized the necessity of having a trained interpreter present during appointments with bilingual patients and advised asking for quality control measures and multiple interpretation modes when hiring an interpreting service. Brenetta inquired about the required medical training for interpreters, to which Carlos confirmed its necessity and detailed the content of such training.

Language Ambassadors, Interpreters, and AI Translation

Carlos highlighted the role and importance of language ambassadors and interpreters, stressing the need for following protocol and ethics. He discussed the application of AI in translation services, stating that while AI can be efficient and effective, it cannot fully replace human interpreters. Carlos expressed concerns about the limitations of AI translation, particularly in medical assessments, and emphasized the importance of human translators in recognizing cultural nuances and subtleties. Brenetta and Yohanna acknowledged his points and indicated they had further questions on the topic.

National Interpreter Regulations and Funding

Yohanna and Carlos discussed the national regulations for interpreters and translators, with Carlos explaining that the American Translations Association sets the standard protocols. Carlos recommended Booselingo for hiring interpreters following these standards and mentioned new legislation due to take effect in July to enforce compliance. There was also a discussion about proficiency tests for spoken languages and translations, with Carlos confirming their existence and highlighting that the State of Oregon has an excellent proficiency test. A follow-up meeting was suggested for July 2nd to further discuss the topic, and Carlos indicated the availability of funding from federal and state agencies to assist small clinics and agencies in providing interpretation services. Lastly, the issue of information dissemination was raised, with Carlos confirming that agencies receiving Federal or state funding should provide this information, and Alice agreeing to bring up the issue to the behavioral health oversight council.

Language Interpreter Services and Training

Shayna and Carlos discussed the use of a third-party interpreter service, Language Link, for their clients. They identified potential issues with interpreters not being familiar with certain technical terms and the need for better communication of specific language nuances. Carlos suggested that Shayna's team could provide interpreters with a glossary of their specific terminology to improve the accuracy of interpretations. They also discussed the possibility of in-house training for interpreters. Yohanna then shared information about an upcoming racism workshop sponsored by Clifford Beers. The team agreed to have their next meeting in July and to plan for the fall and September meetings.