

## Are You Culturally Competent?

Cultural and linguistic competency is the ability to provide respectful and responsive care to members with diverse values, beliefs and behaviors, including tailoring health care delivery to meet members' social, cultural and linguistic needs. The National CLAS Standards, developed by the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, aim to improve health care quality and advance health equity by establishing a collective set of mandates and guidelines that inform, guide and facilitate culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

### **Communicating Across Cultures**

Clear communication is the foundation of culturally and linguistically competent care.

#### ***Guiding the conversation***

- Initial greetings can set the tone for an interaction. If the patient's preference is not clear, ask how they would like to be addressed (i.e. Mr. Jones, Michael, Ms. Gonzalez).
- Ask open-ended questions whenever possible.
- Some individuals can tell you more about themselves through story telling than by answering direct questions.
- Inquire about preferred language and preferred method of communication (i.e. written, spoken, graphics, sign language, assistive listening devices, etc.).
- Consider treatment plans with respect to the patient's culture-based beliefs about health.
- Ask about any complimentary or alternative medicine possibly used by the patient.

#### ***Assisting patients whose first language is not English***

- Speak slowly and try not to raise your voice.
- Use simple words and avoid jargon.
- Do not use acronyms, idioms and avoid technical language if possible. (i.e. shot vs. injection).
- Please articulate words.
- Give information in small chunks and short sentences.
- Repeat important information and have the patient repeat information back to you.
- Inform the interpreter of any specific patient needs.
- Hold a brief introductory discussion.
- Reassure the patient about confidentiality.
- Allow enough time for the interpreted sessions.
- Avoid interrupting during interpretation.
- Speak in the first person.
- Talk to the patient directly, rather than addressing the interpreter.

Please remember that it is never permissible to ask a minor, family member or friend to interpret.

### **Molina's Language Access Services**

Molina strives to ensure good communication with members by providing language access services. Providing language access services is a legal requirement for health care systems that are recipients of federal funds; a member cannot be refused services due to language barriers. Language access services ensure mutual understanding of illness and treatment, increase patient satisfaction and improve the quality of health care for Limited English proficiency patients.

Molina provides the following services to members at no cost, when needed:

- Written material in other formats (i.e. large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, Braille)
- Written material translated into languages other than English
- Oral and Sign Language Interpreter Services
- Relay Service (711)
- 24 Hour Nurse Advice Line
- Bilingual/Bicultural Staff

Also, Molina's materials are always written simply in plain language and at required reading levels. For additional information on Molina's language access services or cultural competency resources, contact Provider Services or visit [www.MolinaHealthcare.com](http://www.MolinaHealthcare.com).

### **Training for Providers**

A series of short Cultural Competency Training videos are available on Molina's website on the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Resources page listed under the Health Resources tab. Topics covered include: How Culture Impacts Health Care, Health Disparities, Social Determinants of Health, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, LGBTQ Population, Immigrant and Refugee Populations, Perspective-taking and Molina's Language Access Services.

### **Sources:**

*U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: Office of Minority Health. Health Research & Educational Trust, 2013.*

*Industry Collaboration Effort, Better Communication, Better Care: Provider Tools to Care for Diverse Populations. Industry Collaboration Effort, Cultural and Linguistic Services, 2017.*