

Know Your Language Access Rights

You have the right to get language help at no cost to you to talk about care for yourself or your child, and for family members as needed. An interpreter speaks English and your language fluently and is trained in medical words to make sure that you and your doctor and other health workers get the right information. A trained interpreter will not share anything about you with anyone else.

You can ask for help from a qualified interpreter, and for written materials in your language, at hospitals, clinics, and medical offices to:

- **Talk with doctors, nurses, and other staff members**
- **Talk about bills and insurance**
- **Make appointments**

Why Language Services Matter for Health Care

It's the Law

State and US laws require equal access to care for people who need help understanding, speaking or reading English, and for people with disabilities.

Helps patients get the right care at the right time

Patients, families, and medical staff all need to be able to talk with each other about health problems, care, what to do at home, and when and how to get help later.

Helps keep patients safe

Studies show that when patients don't get language services, they may be hurt more often by medical errors including mistakes with medicines, need more emergency care, and have more serious health problems in general.

Helps cut costs of medical care

Without language services, doctors don't know what a patient's problem is, so they may order more tests and send patients to the hospital, even when not always needed.

If you have a problem getting language services, you may file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Region X Office, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services **Tel:** (800) 368-1019, **Fax:** (206) 615-2297, **Tdd:** (800) 537-7697, **Web:** www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/index.html Or contact the **Washington State Human Rights Commission:** 1-800-233-3247, **TTY:** 1-800-300-7525 or at <http://www.hum.wa.gov/>



WASCLA

Washington State Coalition for Language Access

www.wascla.org