AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania
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AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania

Language Access: Interpreting and Translation

AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania serves Members with a wide range of language and communication needs. The top languages AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania Members speak other than English are: Spanish, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Nepali, and Swahili. The most requested languages for interpretation are: Spanish, Nepali, Haitian Creole, Russian, and Arabic. Effective communication is essential in healthcare, especially for patients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Although interpretation and translation are often used interchangeably, they serve different purposes. Translation and interpreting services help members and providers communicate clearly across languages and access essential information and services.

Translation involves converting written healthcare materials from one language to another, such as consent forms, discharge instructions, medication guides and patient education materials. Translators can research medical terminology and revise their work to help ensure accuracy.

Interpretation involves converting spoken language in real time. Healthcare interpreters assist during medical appointments, hospital visits, and emergency situations by facilitation communication between patients and healthcare providers.

The main difference is that translation focuses on **written communication**, while interpretation focuses on **spoken communication**. Both services help improve patient understanding, support informed decision making and reduce the risk of medical errors.

Language barriers can contribute to lower-quality care, poorer clinical outcomes, longer hospital stays, and higher readmission rates. Providing language assistance helps ensure patients with limited English proficiency receive high-quality care.

Professional interpreters and translators play a critical role in providing equitable, safe and effective healthcare for diverse populations.

AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania provides interpreting and translation services to support members' language access needs. As of June of 2026, 10% of AmeriHealth Caritas members speak a language other than English, serving members in 117 different languages. For more information, or to access these services, see the Provider's Guide to Securing Interpretation Services for guidance on arranging services for your patients, our Members.

References

American Translators Association. *What is the Difference Between Translation and Interpreting?* https://www.atanet.org/client-assistance/what-is-the-difference-between-translation-and-interpreting

National Council on interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC). *National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care.* https://www.ncihc.org

The Joint Commission. *Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient and Family-Centered Care.* https://www.jointcommision.org

Kent State University, *Translation vs. Interpretation: How Do They Differ?* https://www.kent.edu/mcls/translation-ma/translation-vs-interpretation-how-do-they-differ