

Language Interpretation Services



You have the right to receive care in a language that you understand. If your preferred language is not English, you should have access to a trained, qualified medical interpreter at no cost. Needing translation services is very common and you should never hesitate to ask for an interpreter!

U.S. laws and regulations require this!

- › Depending on the clinic you go to, you may have the choice to have someone interpret for you in-person or through a phone call or video chat.
- › Your medical provider should pause between talking so that the information can be interpreted – if this is not happening, you can just ask the clinician to take more breaks.


Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)

IDPH provides free language support for use in conjunction with IDPH services. This includes qualified interpreters and information written in more than 100 languages.

IDPH can provide interpretation by telephone or in person and can help with facilitating translation of documents. For interpretation by telephone and help with finding translation services, contact the IDPH Center for Minority Health Services at 217-785-4311.

Interpreters Are Available to Help You

Many major health care systems in Illinois, like Northwestern and Rush, offer interpreters to help make appointments easier. Explore your clinic's patient and visitor webpages and brochures or call your clinic to find out what interpreter services are available. You can also ask about translation services when you schedule your appointment!

 **Services should be available through any health system. Just ask for somebody that speaks your language.**

TIPS FOR ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF

- ✔ **Know your rights:** You have the right to receive skilled and compassionate care from each member of our staff and to have your cultural, spiritual and personal values, beliefs, and preferences respected no matter who you are, where you are from, what language you speak, or what you believe.
- ✔ **Bring a friend or family member for support!** Bringing a trusted person to support you can make medical visits easier, but whenever possible, it is best to schedule a professional interpreter as well. Your friend or family member can help clarify, while the professional interpreter makes sure the doctor fully understands your needs. This will help prevent any miscommunication or errors!
- ✔ **Ask questions:** Tell your doctor or nurse if you do not understand any part of the care provided or your care plan.
- ✔ **If you have a concern or question about your care, you can tell someone at the clinic, hospital, or shelter.**