



2009 Cultural Competency Plan

INTRODUCTION

Access Health Solutions (AHS) is committed to establishing multicultural principles and practices throughout its organizational systems of services and programs as it works towards the critical goal of developing a culturally competent service system. This commitment supports the AHS Mission Statement: To reduce healthcare disparities and increase access to care by providing quality, culturally competent healthcare through strong doctor-patient relationships. The Quality Improvement Department's activities support the AHS mission by facilitating the creation of a process by which AHS can describe and respond to the needs and differences of all individuals, regardless of their ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds. The intent of the language of the plan is that it is inclusive and subject to additions as implementation of particular aspects of the plan are undertaken. The plan will be reviewed annually and collaboration is expected to become a larger aspect of the work as it evolves. This serves as an exemplary process for others to follow.

WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

Cultural Competence is the willingness and ability of a system to value the importance of culture in the delivery of services to all segments of the population. It is the use of a systems perspective which values differences and is responsive to diversity at all levels of an organization, i.e., policy, governance, administrative, workforce, provider, and consumer/client. Cultural Competence is developmental, community focused, and family oriented. In particular, it is the promotion of quality services to underserved, racial/ethnic groups through the valuing of differences and integration of cultural attitudes, beliefs, and practices into diagnostic and treatment methods, and throughout the system to support the delivery of culturally relevant and competent care. It is also the development and continued promotion of skills and practices important in clinical practice, cross-cultural interactions, and systems practices among providers and staff to ensure that services are delivered in a culturally competent manner.

Cultural Competence activities include the development of skills through training, use of self-assessment for providers and systems, and implementation of objectives to ensure that governance, administrative policies and practices, and clinical skills and practices are responsive to the culture and diversity within the populations served. It is a process of continuous quality improvement.

BACKGROUND

In the State of Florida, measuring the health status of racial and ethnic minorities is paramount. Section 381.736, Florida Statutes, requires the Department of Health, in collaboration with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and the Minority Physician Networks* (MPNs), to provide a progress report to the Florida Legislature regarding the status of the implementation of the Florida Healthy People 2010 Program. Particular attention is to be given to the health disparities among minorities and non-minorities and the impact of racial and ethnic culture on health status. Florida's population is more racially and ethnically diverse than at any time in our state's history. We are experiencing a significant and rapid demographic shift. As Florida continues its rapid movement towards a truly multicultural state, there are still well-documented racial and ethnic disparities in the delivery of health care to its people. As such, Access Health Solutions is pleased to present the 2009 Cultural Competency Plan, a plan that provides information and internal structures necessary to educate the Enrollees, Providers, AHS employees and systems to ensure culturally competent care. As reflected in the 2006 Florida Department of Health's Healthy People 2010 Minority Health Report, "AHS assists in the reduction of racial and ethnic health disparities through the education of health professionals, the use of non-traditional service delivery methods, addressing language access issues, and a focus on cultural competence." With cultural competency training as the foundation to improve care, these ideologies are promoted through inclusion in our strategic plans, goals, and objectives; integration into training and in-service curricula; in contract performance measures; in collaborative efforts with stakeholders, Enrollees, Providers, advocates and policy makers, and through the promotion of service access to all populations with specific attention given to traditionally underserved populations. Although AHS serves a small subset of Florida's Medicaid population, it is not expected to significantly impact disparate health outcomes at the state level. Our mission is to develop and implement a new and replicable care management model that will contain cost and improve quality, while simultaneously serving as a platform for continuous improvement in the way minorities receive health care services in Florida.

PURPOSE

The Cultural Competency Plan has been updated to outline the methods used by AHS to ensure that Enrollees receive care that is delivered in a culturally and linguistically sensitive manner. The Cultural Competency Plan is comprehensive and incorporates all Enrollees, Providers and AHS staff (Administration, Human Resources, Customer Service, Case Management, Provider Relations, Grievance and Appeals, Medical Management, and Community Development). AHS recognizes that respecting the diversity of our Enrollees has a significant and positive effect on outcomes of care. AHS has adopted the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards as developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, as our official guidelines for providing culturally sensitive services.

GOALS

Goal 1

Ensure that services are provided in a culturally competent manner to all Enrollees, including those with limited English proficiency.

Goal 2

Providers, AHS employees, and systems will effectively provide services to people of all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions in a manner that recognizes values, affirms, and respects the worth of the individual Enrollees and protects and preserves the dignity of each.

Goal 3

AHS will complete an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the CCP. AHS will track and trend any issues identified in the evaluation and implement interventions to improve the provision of services. A description of the evaluation, its results, the analysis of the results and interventions to be implemented will be described in the annual CCP submitted the Agency.

AHS will provide high-quality, culturally sensitive services by identification, delivery and continual monitoring of Enrollees' needs. AHS's hires bilingual staff and develops education training for all relevant staff regarding cultural competency. AHS's Quality Improvement Team monitors and evaluates the level of cultural competency through medical services provided by its Provider network. AHS will develop plans and programs for improving cultural awareness, where a need is identified, through the comprehensive assessment of the Provider Services Network evaluation process. This will ensure that Providers and Staff develop awareness and appreciation of customs, values and belief, and the ability to incorporate them into the assessment of, treatment of, and interaction with our Enrollees. AHS encourages Providers and Staff to share and utilize their own cultural diversity to enhance our program and the services provided to our Enrollees.

If Provider would like to request a copy of the Cultural Competency Plan, please call 1-866-290-9689, ext. 41719 or download a copy at www.accessmpn.com.

OBJECTIVES

- I. To relay to Providers their responsibility to provide competent health care that is culturally and linguistically sensitive
- II. To provide Enrollees access to quality health care services that are culturally and linguistically sensitive
- III. To educate and facilitate communication to develop partnerships among Enrollees, Providers and AHS in an effort to enhance cultural awareness
- IV. To identify Enrollees with cultural and/or linguistic needs through demographic information and Enrollee expressed wishes.
- V. To provide competent translation/interpreter services to our Enrollees who require these services

- VI. To provide our Enrollees with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) the assistance they need to understand the care being provided and to accomplish effective interactions with their health care Providers

CULTURAL COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

1. Access Health Solutions offers a choice of providers with cultural and linguistic expertise.
2. Access Health Solutions expects the provider to be knowledgeable about their patient's culture and to use this information in treating their problem.
3. Access Health Solutions expects the provider to ask questions relevant to how the family and culture values might influence how the patient deals with being sick.
4. The Access Health Solutions program covers benefits for risk factors common among ethnic groups.
5. Access Health Solutions is flexible in authorizing services that may not be usual and customary, but practiced within the patient's culture, e.g., medication.
6. Access Health Solutions empowers the patient by allowing them to influence how the system will meet their needs and expects the patient to be socially responsible and accountable.
7. Access Health Solutions encourages the provider to listen to the patient's opinion in considering treatment options.
8. Access Health Solutions provides customer service in four languages: English, Spanish, French and Creole.

DELIVERY OF CARE AND SERVICES

AHS has available bilingual/bicultural staff to provide culturally sensitive information and to provide the linguistic skills required for meeting the needs of our Enrollees, including one-on-one communication and access to interpreter services. AHS will notify its Provider Service Network that interpreter services are required. All Provider Relations Specialist/Managers, at the point of contract, must make Providers aware of interpreter services that are available through AHS. The Provider Credentialing Application also captures Network Developments' capacity to recruit Providers of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds by documenting the Provider's self-identified ethnicity, culture and race. Furthermore, the Provider Re-credentialing Application includes a question about other languages spoken by Providers to indicate their linguistic diversity.

AHS distributes the Cultural Competency Plan to all contracted Providers on an annual basis via the Provider Education Meeting. In addition, this information is available via the AHS website and is updated annually and submitted to the Agency for Health Care Administration. AHS monitors the delivery of care and services in relation to the provision of culturally competent services through a comprehensive set of Quality Methods that includes, but is not limited to, the CLAS Provider Self-Assessment Survey process,

the Ambulatory Medical Record Review process, the CAHPS Member Satisfaction Survey and Provider Satisfaction Survey.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Internally, AHS will provide staff training, particularly to Customer Service, Provider Relations and Medical Case Management Departments at least on an annual basis to ensure that services are provided effectively to our Enrollees of different cultures. This training will be customized to fit the needs of AHS based upon the nature of the contacts with our Enrollees and/or providers.

AHS will provide training for all our Providers with direct Enrollee contact to ensure that they are aware of the importance of providing services in a culturally competent manner. This training will include ideas and assistance about how to provide culturally competent care.

AHS has partnered with Florida Medical Quality Assurance, Inc. (FMQA) and the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization of Florida to promote the adoption of the national Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in health care. This partnership will enable physicians to work more effectively in cross-cultural situations to promote delivery of culturally competent service.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Addressing language access issues requires multi-faceted strategies. AHS' first contact with the Enrollee begins with the Welcome Letter. AHS sends language-appropriate mailings with a special adage that states that materials are available in prevalent languages. AHS primarily utilizes bilingual staff and Language Line Interpreter Service (1-888-808-9008), a phone service that facilitates communication with non-English speakers, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as its secondary language access service for Limited English Proficiency Enrollees. Translations are provided on a case-by-case basis. All Customer Service Representatives are able to communicate the essential health statements in English, Spanish and French Kreyol:

English: *“In what language do you (or the person whom you are inquiring about) prefer to receive your health care?”*

Spanish: *“En qué idioma (o la persona por la que usted está preguntando) prefiere recibir sus servicios médicos?”*

French Kreyol: *“Dans quelle langue vous fait-il(ou la personne que vous inwireiez de) prefere recevoir votre soin de sante?”*

Additional Resources Available Include;

literacy may also affect patients and families with adequate language literacy. By mobilizing the resources provided by Region V Adult Literacy Center, AHS seeks to ensure that minority patients are empowered to advocate for their health and to interact with providers more effectively. “The Health Literacy: Help Your Patients Understand Educational Kit” is the American Medical Association’s (AMA) Foundation’s primary tool for informing physicians, health care professionals and patient advocates about health literacy.

Learning objectives for this education program are:

- to understand the full scope of health literacy
- to recognize health system barriers faced by patients with low health literacy
- to improve verbal and written communications to patients
- to create a "shame-free" environment for patients
- additional resources for education and involvement

*The American Medical Association (AMA) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (CME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The AMA designates this educational activity for a maximum of 2.5 Category 1 credits toward the AMA Physician's Recognition Award. Each physician should claim only those credits that he/she actually spent in the activity.

COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH FAIRS AND PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS INITIATIVES

AHS addresses the health disparity in minority health and raises awareness of health issues in our service areas. These events are organized by AHS, local faith-based and community-centered organizations, and are a joint effort to present minority health issues and resolutions collectively as one voice. The motivation behind such collaborations is to synergize the work of several organizations, all of which work to eliminate disparities in access, treatment and outcomes in healthcare.

Goals of the Community-Based Health Fairs and Public Health Awareness Initiatives include educating the community and physicians on the critical issues behind health care disparities, and providing a forum to discuss the barriers facing physicians and patients in minority communities, such as:

- Participation in an event or activity that promotes and contributes to the health and well being of any group
- An event or activity designed to be of benefit to the community
- An event or activity to support not-for-profit agencies, institutions or foundations
- Structured programs to promote tutoring, mentoring, visiting, coaching whose purpose is to assist others
- Participation in an event or activity affiliated with a club, religious organization, arts or cultural association, or political organization that seeks to make a positive contribution in the community

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

AHS conducts an annual evaluation of the Cultural Competency Plan to assess overall effectiveness and to determine future directions. AHS developed, implemented and now promotes a written strategic plan which supports the Cultural Competency Plan and which outlines clear goals, policies, operational plans, and accountability/oversight mechanisms to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The Cultural Competency Performance Improvement Project (PIP) is a monitoring tool that is continuously evaluated to determine whether the AHS Cultural Competency Plan was successfully implemented and that Survey results are accessed to identify areas for improvement and revision. The evaluation will serve as the foundation for planning the upcoming year's Plan and activities relating to elevating cultural awareness.

THE CHALLENGE

There exists a challenge both nationally and statewide for the standardized collection of race, ethnicity and language data due to inconsistent data in the Medicaid arena.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Health Promotion Materials Acquisition and Dissemination is available:

- Physician Toolkit and Curriculum: Resources to Implement Cross-Cultural Guidelines for Medicaid Practitioners (<http://www.omhrc.gov/assets/pdf/checked/toolkit.pdf>) within the MPN
- Quality Care for Diverse Populations:
<http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/cme/selfstudy/qualitycarevideo.html>
- A Family Physician's Practical Guide to Culturally Competent Care:
<https://cccm.thinkculturalhealth.org>

The following websites offer information, examples and other resources that may be helpful in our work:

- <http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/>
The National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University increases the capacity of health care and mental health programs to design, implement and evaluate culturally and linguistically competent service delivery systems. Publications and web links available. The Cultural Competence Exchange includes success stories like this "Journey towards Cultural Competence" example from Wisconsin.
- <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html>
Culture Matters is a cross-cultural training workbook developed by the Peace Corps to help new volunteers acquire the knowledge and skills to work successfully and respectfully in other cultures.
- http://www.has.vcu.edu/psy/iam/compendium_intro.htm
A thorough compendium of best practices in cultural competence training and education is made available through Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for African-American Mental Health.

- <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/>
The Multicultural Pavilion offers resources and dialogue for educators, students and activists on all aspects of multicultural education.
- <http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/>
The Center for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services collects and describes early childhood/early intervention resources and serves as point of exchange for users.
- http://ericae.net/faqs/Cognitive_Styles/Cognitive_styles.htm
Information on different learning styles, possibly another dimension in understanding an individual's culture. Provided by ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation at the University of Maryland.