

Expanding Quality Care Through CLAS Standards

The National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards in health and healthcare aim to establish a framework for organizations to serve the nation's increasingly diverse communities. Culturally and linguistically appropriate services are respectful of and responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of all individuals. The goals of the CLAS Standards are to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate healthcare disparities.

5 Recommended Areas of Focus

The full CLAS Standards provide 15 action steps. Here are the key five we encourage you to focus on to improve CLAS in your clinical setting.

- 1. Establish effective, equitable, respectful, quality care and services** that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.
- 2. Educate providers, leadership, and workforce** in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.
- 3. Offer language assistance** to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them.
 - A. Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance; help patients understand why they should avoid using untrained individuals or minors as interpreters.
 - B. Supply easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in languages commonly used by populations in your service area.
- 4. Conduct ongoing assessments** of your organization's CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.
- 5. Partner with the community** to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and services to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness.

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Getting Started

1. Identify an internal lead to promote CLAS Standards and provide trainings to employees.
2. Refer to the practical guide, "A Practical Guide to Implementing the National CLAS Standards," for tips on implementation. This is a 59-page PDF available for download from the CMS Office of Minority Health's website: [CMS.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH](https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH). Select Resource Center, then Quality Improvement and Interventions, and you'll find a link to the document on that page.

Resources

- **Think Cultural Health**, part of the HHS website: [ThinkCulturalHealth.hhs.gov/clas](https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas)
- **Your PacificSource Provider Service Representative:** PacificSource is dedicated to improving the health outcomes of every member in our community. We're eager to partner with you and your staff to ensure quality care is afforded to all. As always, please reach out to us for further assistance.