



Counties  
Surveyed

## ▶ RESOURCES

*In response to this issue, the California Medical Association, with the generous support of The California Endowment, conducted a survey of interpreter resources in Northern California including hospitals, health plans, community colleges, and community-based health organizations. As a safety net for those situations when other interpreter resources are unavailable, the California Medical Association has developed a directory of community volunteers who have graciously agreed to assist in these emergency/urgent care situations. By dialing the included 1-866-241-4CMA, this directory can be accessed.*

This brochure was made possible by a generous contribution from The California Endowment. Our special thanks to the interpreters in our local communities who have generously volunteered their time and skills to assist in this endeavor.



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\* CMA makes no guarantee about interpreter services including but not limited to the availability, accuracy, or completeness of the interpretation.



## NEED AN INTERPRETER?



California Medical Association  
*Physicians dedicated to the health of Californians*

1-866-241-4CMA

## ▶ DIVERSITY

California's ethnic diversity is a great asset to this state. However, this diversity also creates certain difficulties in delivering quality health care. Most prominent are the obstacles created to health access stemming from language barriers. Medi-Cal reports that in Northern California alone, enrollees commonly speak over 16 different languages.<sup>1</sup> The diversity of languages spoken creates a challenge for health care providers, particularly for those who practice in rural settings or who are otherwise unable to utilize resources at large medical centers.

## ▶ COMMUNICATION

Communication with limited English proficient patients in their native language is essential to obtaining accurate patient histories as well as providing information and instructions that the patient can understand. Effective communication also minimizes the likelihood of medical errors. Further, an ability to communicate effectively helps build trust with the patient and encourages patient compliance while increasing patient satisfaction.

<sup>1</sup> Medi-Cal County Data Book, 2002.

## ▶ HEALTH PLAN INFORMATION

The Health Plans listed below provide interpreter services free-of-charge

to their members. Arrangements for interpreter services should be scheduled in advance if possible.



## ▶ HEALTH PLANS

Aetna	800/624-0756
Blue Shield	800/431-2809
Blue Cross:	
MediCal	800/407-4267
Healthy Families	800/845-3604
CIGNA	800/832-3211
Health Net	800/522-0088
Kaiser	916/614-4050
Molina	562/435-3666
Partnership Health Plan of California	800/863-4155
Western Health Advantage	888/563-2250

If you have a patient who is not covered by a health plan in California, please contact the toll-free number listed below between 9 am - 5 pm, Mon - Fri, and we will assist you in trying to locate an interpreter in your area.

# 1-866 241- 4CMA

The volunteers in our directory have varied experience as interpreters in the health care setting. However, as there is no universally accepted medical interpreter certification, services rendered by these volunteers may vary in quality. Further, the volunteers' qualifications are self-reported and have not been verified. Therefore, this service is not intended to replace qualified medical interpreters currently working in hospitals and clinics.\*

