



# Celebrating the Diversity of Our Patients by Improving Communication in their Native Language



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## Background

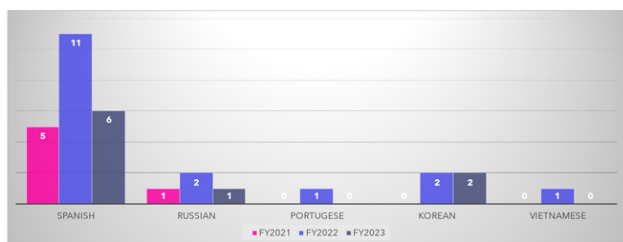
On 4 South, we serve a diverse patient demographic, many of whom speak English as a second language, and are admitted for intricate oncology treatments. While the organization provides interpreter services, such as the MARTII system, which facilitates access to video interpreters for communication with hospital personnel. This method has not been wholly embraced by patients due to its lack of personal touch. Additionally, the system's occasional delays can disrupt nurses' efficiency. To address this, we initiated a call for volunteer interpreters from our own staff on the unit. This initiative has been met with enthusiastic participation and has led to the certification of several staff members as interpreters for Cedars-Sinai, enhancing direct and compassionate communication on the unit.

## Literature Review

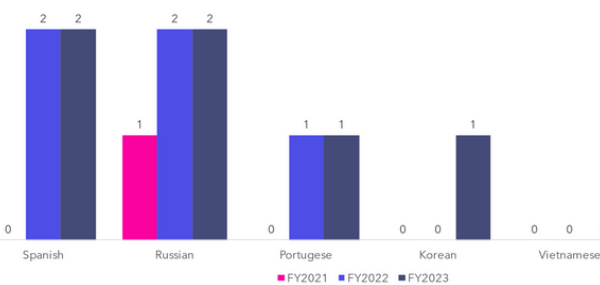
“Effective communication is an essential duty of a provider and paramount for shared decision-making and patient-centered care” (Department of Health & Human Services, 2021). Communicating in the patient’s preferred language is an ethical duty that impacts patient experience and outcome. Clear communication can improve patient safety, patient experience, and patient adherence to medications and treatment regimens. Also, providing communication in the patient’s preferred language improves health disparities. It allows clear communication between patients and the healthcare team. “Health equality cannot be achieved without understanding the needs of all people” (Curt et al., 2021). Gleason et al. (2020) identified language as one cause of diagnostic errors within the emergency department. Yet, language is a healthcare barrier that can be overcome.

## Methodology

### STAFF WHO VOLUNTEERED BY LANGUAGE



### 4 South Interpreters by Language



## Objectives

1. Understanding the Impact of Language Services in Healthcare Learners will be able to comprehend the importance of providing language services in healthcare, particularly in serving non-English-speaking patients. They will understand how language barriers can affect patient safety, satisfaction, and health outcomes, and how overcoming these barriers through initiatives like the unit interpreter program can enhance healthcare delivery.
2. Implementing and Evaluating Multilingual Programs in Healthcare Settings Learners will be able to grasp the steps involved in implementing a program that encourages healthcare providers to become certified language interpreters. This includes understanding the volunteer and testing process and the subsequent training and certification. Additionally, learners will learn how to evaluate such programs' effectiveness and success, including examining volunteer retention rates, patient satisfaction, and program expansion.

## Interventions

- A call for volunteers was disseminated via email, seeking staff members willing to certify as Cedars-Sinai interpreters for the 4 South unit.
- Interested staff reached out to the Associate Director to express their interest.
- The Associate Director then liaised with the interpreter services department.
- Arrangements were made for the interested staff to take the certification exam within their department.
- Upon passing the exam, employees were enrolled in a 2-hour training session to equip them for their interpreting roles.
- Certified staff received a special badge attachment indicating their qualification to interpret in a specific language.
- Out of 19 registered nurses who volunteered, 9 successfully completed the interpreter examination.

### 2022 Process Update

- Staff were relieved from the requirement to take the exam at the interpreter services location due to logistical challenges, such as leaving the floor or coming in on a day off.
- Examination details were sent via email.
- The exam was conducted in the Associate Director's office.
- Once staff were notified of their successful exam completion, they participated in the 2-hour interpreter training session.

### 2023 Process Update

- Staff were given a QR code to log instances when they served as interpreters, streamlining the tracking process.

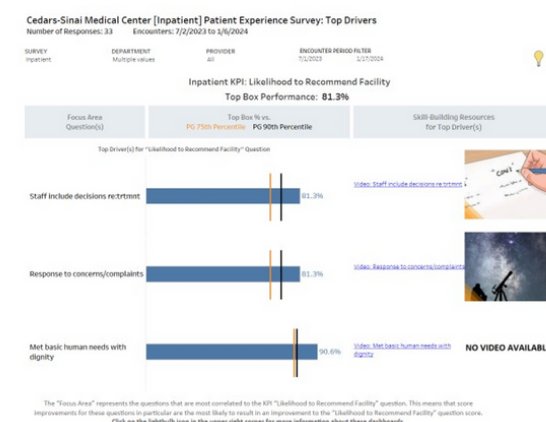
## Sustainment Plan

- Persist in motivating team members to become interpreters in their language.
- Incorporate the goal of becoming a certified unit interpreter into performance evaluations.
- Maintain collaboration with the Patient Experience Interpreter Services Division for comprehensive testing and education.
- Regularly assess and refine the interpreting process for enhanced effectiveness.

## Clinical Impact

- This program's positive influence is reflected in the favorable patient feedback highlighting the substantial appreciation for communication in their native or preferred language.
- Comments from patients underscore an enhanced sense of comfort and trust towards our healthcare team due to this initiative.
- An interesting aspect for further exploration is the initiative's effect on staff retention. Currently, 67% of the nine certified interpreter RNs continue to be actively engaged on the unit.
- A number of RNs and CPs are gearing up to sit for the interpreter exam in FY2024, signaling the anticipated growth of our interpreter services on the unit.
- The establishment of unit-specific interpreter services constitutes a noteworthy advancement in bolstering patient-provider interactions, patient contentment, and trust. This could lead to better health outcomes among our culturally diverse patient base by fostering clearer understanding and adherence to prescribed treatments and medications.
- The utilization of our unit's staff for improved communication not only showcases the cultural richness within our team and the community but also emphasizes the unit's commitment to inclusive care.

## Patient Experience Results



## References

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