

Regulatory Provider Training

Updated February 2025

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)



What is CLAS?

CLAS stands for culturally and linguistically appropriate services which is a phrase created by the Federal Office of Minority Health. The phrase is about respecting and responding to an individual's health needs and preferences.

At HPSM, CLAS refers to activities and services that respect the linguistic and cultural diversity of our membership and are responsive to members' communication needs at points of service. CLAS helps to improve members' experience through customer support, and through health care that responds to our members' unique needs and beliefs.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)



What is culture? Culture is comprised of a group's learned patterns of behavior, values, norms, and practices.

What is cultural competency? Organizational cultural competency is the ability of health care organizations and individuals to actively apply knowledge of cultural behavior and linguistic issues when interacting with members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Cultural competency requires the recognition and integration by the health care professionals of health plan members' behaviors, values, norms, practices, attitudes, and beliefs about disease causation and prevention into health care services provided.

Why is cultural competency important? Being culturally competent means improved communication between providers and health plan members who may be from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Culturally competent care ultimately leads to improved access and health outcomes.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

Elements of culture include:

- Collective values, experiences, beliefs- beliefs about health and health care, as well as behavioral styles.
- Non-verbal communication.
- Perspectives, world views, frames of reference.
- Community motivation and social identification.
- Cultural awareness.
- Languages and dialect.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)



Language Assistance Services

Accurate communication between patients and healthcare providers helps reduce health disparities and improves quality of care. HPSM provides 24/7 telephonic video interpreter services at no cost to the member.

- More than 200 languages are available including American Sign Language.
- HPSM can provide an office-based training session to discuss how to identify and address the linguistic needs of patients whose English proficiency is limited.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

Language Assistance Services (continued)

When using interpreter services be sure to:

- Inform assigned members with Limited English Proficiency, on right to qualified interpreter (phone or video) free of charge.
- Document member's language preference in medical record.
- Document member's request or refusal of interpreter service (phone or video) at each visit, and how the language barrier was addressed (i.e. certified bilingual staff person, member brought friend or relative to serve as interpreter)

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)



Culturally Competent Care

Visit <https://www.hpsm.org/provider/resources/language-services> for links to cultural competency training and resources, including:

- Tips for working with diverse patients.
- Guidelines for communicating with hard of hearing patients.
- Tips for identifying health literacy issues.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)



Requirements for Member Materials

Translated Materials and Alternative Formats: HPSM materials are available translated into HPSM's threshold languages, which include English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Tagalog, as well as alternative formats, such as Braille. It is the provider's responsibility to provide materials in the member's desired language or in the format of their choosing. It is also the provider's responsibility to offer these materials to the member – it is NOT the member's responsibility to request them.

Reading level: All materials for members should read at a sixth-grade literacy level.

Contact: For additional resources and questions, call HPSM's Health Education line at **650-616-2165**.

Contact Information



Here is important contact information for HPSM providers:

- **General email:** PSInquiries@hpsm.org
- **General phone number:** 650-616-2106
- **Contracting:** HPSMcontracting@hpsm.org
- **Credentialing:** HPSMcredentialing@hpsm.org