



# Making the Case for Implementing the National CLAS Standards

The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care (National CLAS Standards) support many aspects of CMS' mission and provide a blueprint for health care organizations to provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care

and services. The purpose of this resource is to support providers in making the case for implementing the National CLAS Standards in their respective settings by describing how the Standards can help providers improve cost-effectiveness, safety, efficiency, and the quality of care they provide.<sup>1</sup>



## COST EFFECTIVENESS

### Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care is cost-effective.

- Low health literacy adds an additional \$106-238 billion in cost to the health care system.<sup>2</sup> Culturally and linguistically tailored care helps to improve health literacy.<sup>3</sup>
- Using live interpretation<sup>4</sup> and communication technologies<sup>5</sup> decreases the cost of care for people with limited English proficiency (LEP) and people with disabilities.
- Implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate care reduces the cost of hospital visits<sup>6</sup> by decreasing emergency department visits and readmissions as well as shortening lengths of stay.<sup>7</sup>



## SAFETY

### Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care improves patient safety.

- Individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) are more likely to be harmed during adverse events and more likely to experience adverse outcomes than English-proficient patients.<sup>8</sup>
- Failure to address culture, language, and health literacy can lead to a variety of adverse events affecting patient safety, including but not limited to missed screenings, diagnostic errors, and inappropriate care transitions.<sup>9</sup>
- Engaging patients as safety partners in care can help identify and rectify preventable adverse events.<sup>10</sup>



## EFFICIENCY

### Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care improves health care efficiency by:

- Decreasing median Medicare lengths of stay at the hospital;<sup>11</sup>
- Increasing the efficient use of staff, facilities, and supplies;<sup>12</sup>
- Improving communications between providers and patients, allowing for co-creation of treatment plans that are more culturally appropriate and effective;<sup>13, 14</sup> and
- Increasing the likelihood that individuals will follow provider-recommended self-management plans.<sup>15, 16</sup>



## QUALITY

### Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care improves quality of health care.

- Failing to address cultural differences between patients and providers leads to misunderstandings, value conflicts, and misaligned perceptions of health and illness, which contribute to poor health outcomes.<sup>17</sup>
- Hiring qualified interpreters for people with LEP and qualified auxiliary aids and services (such as readers and interpreters) for people with disabilities has been shown to improve communication (e.g., reduced errors, improved comprehension), utilization, and satisfaction with care.<sup>18</sup>
- Care provided in an individual's primary language increases their participation in mental health treatment interventions.<sup>19</sup>

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