

LC 3 Community Advocacy Project

Partnered with the Cincinnati Public Health
Department

Introduction

- Language barriers are a major obstacle for millions of patients trying to get access to quality healthcare in the United States.
- It can lead to **miscommunication with providers, difficulty in scheduling appointments, and less opportunity for patient education**, among other negative outcomes.
- 8.8% of Cincinnati residents aged 5+ speak a language other than English at home.
- There is an **expanding population of non-English speakers**.
- In the past decade, the greater Cincinnati area has seen a 75% increase in the foreign-born population (a significant proportion of which can be assumed to not speak English as a first language).
- Cincinnati needs to address the language barrier in our healthcare system to provide equitable access to healthcare for all.



Overview and Impact

- Current city-wide policies and practices regarding language accommodation in healthcare facilities are adherent to federal requirements: to provide interpreter and translation services to patients and families with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- **The Language Access policy** at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center mandates that the hospital follows this federal regulation, which **establishes a framework for providing the necessary resources to effectively care for LEP patients**.
- These types of policies give rise to several issues including **difficulty accessing interpreter services** and **miscommunication** with LEP patients and family members.
- A more **nuanced, locally mandated policy** would help mitigate these challenges by making multilingual healthcare providers more accessible to LEP patients.

Data Analysis and Community Perspectives

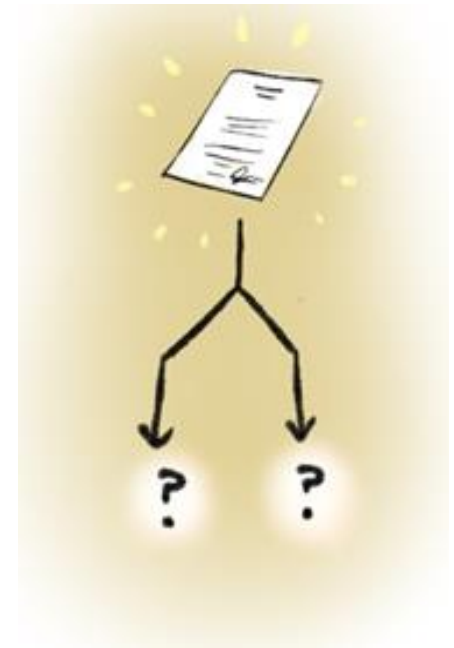
LEP households were approximately 2% from 2016-2020 according to the Cincinnati Public Health Department Community Health Needs Assessment, 2023. Additionally, approximately 110,000 or 5% of the Cincinnati population are immigrants.

- **Current Policy Strengths:**

- Policy is clearly documented, available to the public, and contains criteria for reevaluation.

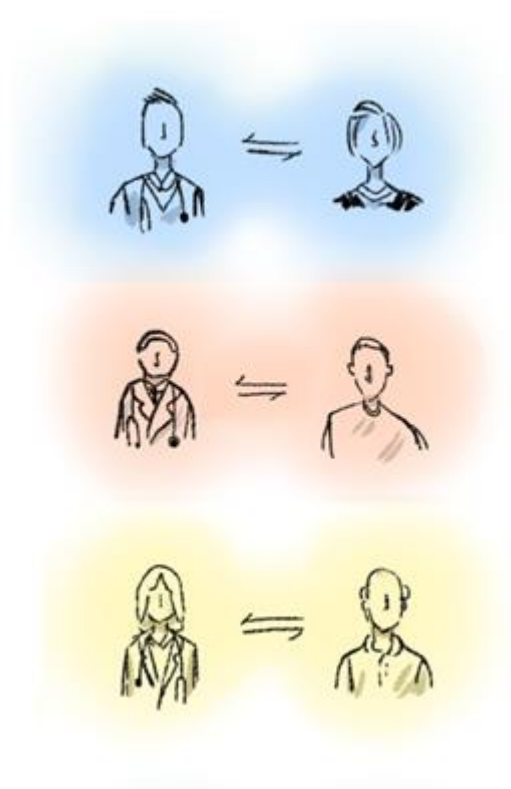
- **Current Policy Weaknesses:**

- Difficulties accessing interpreter services
- Uncertainty in communication with LEP families
- Unclear and inconsistent expectations and roles of team members
- Unmet family engagement expectations



Policy Analysis

- Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's Dr. Taru Saigal launched a new program that aimed to match bilingual physicians to patients with limited English proficiency.
- Dr. Saigal and 10 other primary care physicians are being matched with patients who speak a variety of languages, including Arabic, Gujarati, Nepali, along with many others.
- Early implementation has been limited, but has been successful in streamlining and improving the quality of care for many LEP patients.
- The creation of a local policy mandating information about bilingual clinicians being made publicly available is an important step in providing equitable healthcare for non-English speakers.



Proposed Advocacy Strategy

1. The creation of a publicly available list of the physicians certified to provide care in a different language (other than English).
 - This will minimize communication barriers that LEP patients often experience by assisting in identifying providers that share their language and possibly their cultural values and experiences.
2. Incentivize providers to be certified medical interpreters.
 - Our goal is also to expand upon the base of providers able to adequately communicate with LEP patients in the medical space.

It is hypothesized that success in this endeavor can be observed through improved clinical outcomes correlating with the percentage of LEP patients and families that receive interpretive or translation services.



Conclusion and Request for Support

- This policy will allow the city to further support patients, their families, and the systems already offering support to them.
- A resource that is standardized and easily accessible for each hospital will **reduce the time required to locate a provider who shares their language.**
- This is a step toward equitable access by promoting more efficient healthcare utilization by LEP patients, improving health outcomes overall and facilitating trust between a provider and their patients.
- Because language is both an essential part of how we provide high-quality healthcare and an increasing concern as the population changes shape within Cincinnati, it should be a focus of policies within the city.
- Other places have demonstrated that it can be done, and so – **why not here?**

Questions?

References

Bridging the language barriers of foreign-born patients. health.osu.edu. Published January 25, 2023. <https://health.osu.edu/health/general-health/multilingual-doctors-improve-healthcare-equity>

Choe AY, Unaka NI, Schondelmeyer AC, Bignall WJR, Vilvens HL, Thomson JE. Inpatient Communication Barriers and Drivers When Caring for Limited English Proficiency Children. J Hosp Med. 2019;14(10):607-613. doi:10.12788/jhm.3240

Cincinnati Childrens Hospital Medical Center Guidelines. Affordable Language Services. Revised May 6, 2019. <https://www.affordablelanguageservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/1-LFT-CCHMC-GUIDELINES-6-18-19.pdf>

“U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Cincinnati City, Ohio.” United States Census Bureau, www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cincinnatiyohio/PST045222. Accessed 15 Oct. 2024.

“Cincinnati-Middletown, OH.” PeopleGroups Initiative, Eternal Interactive, Inc., www.peoplegroups.info/site/MetroHighlight/id/17140/name/Cincinnati-Middletown. Accessed 15 Oct. 2024.