The National CLAS Standards: 
A Framework for Advancing Language Access, 
Health Literacy and the Provision of Culturally and 
Linguistically Appropriate Services

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OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES (CLAS) IN HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

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CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES (CLAS)

Services that are respectful of and responsive to individual cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy levels, and communication needs and employed by all members of an organization (regardless of size) at every point of contact.
NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES IN HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

PRINCIPAL STANDARD

Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.
NATIONAL CLAS STANDARDS THEMES

1. PRINCIPAL STANDARD
2-4. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP & WORKFORCE
5-8. COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE
9-15. ENGAGEMENT, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY
IMPORTANCE OF CLAS

CASE FOR CLAS

- Increase Access to Care
- Improve Quality of Services
- Respond to Demographic Changes
- Reduce Litigation
- Meet Legislative Requirements
- Meet Your Mission
- Align with Accreditation Requirements
OMH’S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING CLAS

- National CLAS Standards
- OMH Grant Awards
- Think Cultural Health
THINKCULTURALHEALTH.HHS.GOV

CLAS E-Learning Programs

› Behavioral Health Professionals
› Maternal Healthcare Providers
› Disaster and Emergency Personnel
› Nurses
› Oral Health Professionals
› Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners
› Promotores de Salud & Community Health Workers
› Communication Guide
› Deployment Refresher for US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Officers
CMS & THE NATIONAL CLAS STANDARDS

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CMS ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL CLAS STANDARDS

• Enterprise-wide Strategic Planning
• Policy, Programs, and Data
• Engagement and Resources
CMS FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH EQUITY

Priority 1: Expand the Collection, Reporting, and Analysis of Standardized Data

Priority 2: Assess Causes of Disparities Within CMS Programs, and Address Inequities in Policies and Operations to Close Gaps

Priority 3: Build Capacity of Health Care Organizations and the Workforce to Reduce Health and Health Care Disparities

Priority 4: Advance Language Access, Health Literacy, and the Provision of Culturally Tailored Services

Priority 5: Increase All Forms of Accessibility to Health Care Services & Coverage
CMS: ENTERPRISE-WIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

• CMS Implementation of the National CLAS Standards
• CMS Language Access Plan
• CMS Framework for Advancing Health Care in Rural, Tribal, and Geographically Isolated Communities
CMS: POLICIES, PROGRAMS & DATA
(EXAMPLE MEDICARE)

Medicare Advantage – 2024 Medicare Advantage and Part D Final Rule (April 2023)
- Cultural competence requirements
- Digital literacy requirements
- Provider directory requirements
- Quality improvement program requirement

Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey
- Language spoken at home
- Speak English
- Read English
- Quality of vision
- Difficulty hearing
- Finding information
- Communicating with providers
CMS: ENGAGEMENT & RESOURCES

- **Marketplace Assister Training**
- **MLN trainings** on language access, physical accessibility, LGBTQI+ individuals
- **Resources for Integrated Care** trainings and resources on long term services and support, caregiver support
- **Public-facing resources** on culturally and linguistically tailored diabetes care; Improving Communication Access for Individuals who are blind and have low vision & Individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing; Guide to Developing a Language Access Plan.
- **Coverage to Care** resources
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THANK YOU