

Integrating Cultural Competency into Organizational Practice

Nancy Steiger
San Mateo Medical Center

September 27, 2005



An Overview of Our Organization

- San Mateo Medical Center is licensed for 509 beds including 345 long term care beds
- 13 clinics provide more than 220,000 ambulatory visits
- 32,000 ED visits
- More than 50% of our patients are monolingual non English speaking

Cultural Competency Became a Priority Because....

- Of the diverse population we serve, 35% require interpretation
- We are heavily focused on patient safety
- We have also been focusing on service excellence

We Had to Convince...

- Ourselves that there was a relationship between:
 - Cultural competence
 - Language access
 - Service excellence
 - Patient safety
- Ourselves that we could find funding

What We've Accomplished

- Increased access to the Language Line Services
- Participating in a 4 County collaborative of public hospitals to create a ready pool of multilingual interpreters using a call center and state-of-the-art voice and videoconferencing technology
- Provided 40 hours on training for medical interpreters

What We've Accomplished

- Trained ED providers on how to access interpreter services and how to work effectively with interpreters which improved the degree of linguistic and cultural competence in the ED, where the demand for interpreter services is the greatest and the ability to predict need is the most limited

What We've Accomplished

- The ED is now better able to treat patients in ways that respect and take into consideration their cultural and linguistic backgrounds

To Sustain This Effort, We ...

- Linked cultural competence to patient safety and service excellence In an effort to promote a culture of safety
- Built cultural competence into
 - Initial orientation
 - Ongoing training
 - Job descriptions/competences
 - Policy and procedure

Advice for Someone Wanting to Do This...

- Think about how language access and cultural competence fit into the organizational goals and strategies and ensure that it is not viewed as the strategy of the day
- Start by recognizing special needs and concerns of clients that have limited English proficiency (LEP) and/or clients who are member of linguistic & culturally diverse groups aimed at finding the best approach for serving LEP clients combining high quality of service with efficiency and cost-effectiveness

Advice for Someone Wanting to Do This...

- Make incremental, small changes using rapid cycle PDSA interventions
- Involve front line and impacted staff along with managers in the development process
- Seek support from outside the organization and become involved in collaborative efforts with other institutions
- Give it roots and wings