

**TOPIC: IN SUPPORT OF INCREASING AWARENESS AND EVALUATE
COMPETENCY OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE
CARE**

SUBMITTED BY: University of Alabama, Huntsville and Texas Nurses' Student Association

WHEREAS, 55 million Americans speak a language other than English at home, and 24.4 million have limited English proficiency (LEP); and

WHEREAS, the Nursing Code of Ethics requires nurses to "uphold principles of justice by safeguarding human rights, equity, and fairness;" and

WHEREAS, on December 22, 2000, the National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) were published by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health to support a more consistent and comprehensive approach to cultural and linguistic competence in health care; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" was signed by President Clinton in 2000, and the 2008 Joint Commission standards state that "the organization respects the patient's right to and need for effective communication;" and

WHEREAS, the following CLAS standards are required by Federal mandate for agencies that receive Federal funds:

Standard 4 Health care organizations must offer and provide language assistance services, including bilingual staff and interpreter services, at no cost to each patient with limited English proficiency at all points of contact, in a timely manner during all hours of operation.

Standard 5 Health care organizations must provide to patients in their preferred language both verbal offers and written notices informing them of their right to receive language assistance services.

Standard 6 Health care organizations must assure the competence of language assistance provided to limited English proficient patients by interpreters and bilingual staff. Family and friends should not be used to provide interpretation services (except on request by the patient/consumer).

Standard 7 Health care organizations must make available easily understood patient-related materials and post signage in the languages of the commonly encountered groups and/or groups represented in the service area; and

WHEREAS, of sixty hospitals that met the cultural and linguistic needs of patients, 75% of facilities sampled did not have written human resource policies regarding the cultural competence of staff, nor did they provide ongoing training that addresses the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate care; and

WHEREAS, "50% of judgment hospitals reported using family members often/regularly/frequently even though more than half of them have hospital employed interpreters and other mechanisms available;" therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) encourage its constituents to create awareness that failure to provide appropriate language services to patients is a direct violation of Federal mandates under CLAS and Joint Commission standards through an article published in *Imprint*, if feasible; and be it further

- RESOLVED, that the NSNA also promote awareness about the cultural competence of staff in nursing care through articles published in *Imprint*, and any other publications of NSNA as deemed necessary by the NSNA Board of Directors, if feasible; and be it further
- RESOLVED, that the NSNA encourage state boards of nurses to set standards requiring that all nursing licensure programs include cultural competency requirements in their nursing education program to evaluate students' ability to appropriately utilize interpreter services and available resources for providing culturally competent care; and be it further
- RESOLVED, that the NSNA send a copy of this resolution to the American Nurses Association, American Medical Association, the National League for Nursing, the American Hospital Association, the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems, the Joint Commission, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National Organization of Associate Degree Nurses, the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the American Translators Association, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and all others deemed appropriate by the NSNA Board of Directors.