

Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment Tool

The attached *Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment Tool* was developed by health plans in California to help identify and document the bilingual capabilities of providers and their staff. This tool also enables Anthem Blue Cross (Anthem) and its providers to improve patient/member care and culturally competent service in a collaborative manner.

It is important that all bilingual providers and staff members, prior to interpreting on the job, self-assess their non-English speaking and understanding language skills by completing the attached forms. Copies of these forms should be kept on file along with additional qualifications. Please note that changes to the language capability of bilingual providers and their staff must be reported to Anthem as this information is shared with patients.

Providers and staff who rate themselves with speaking, reading, or writing capabilities below level 3 as defined on the attached Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment Key should not use their bilingual skills or serve as interpreters and/or translators. And as a reminder, providers should discourage Anthem members from using friends and family members, especially children, as interpreters. For those instances when you cannot communicate with a member due to language barriers, interpreter services are available at no cost to you or the member. Face-to-face interpreters for members needing language assistance, including American Sign Language, are available by placing a request for services at least 72 hours in advance. A 24-hour cancellation notice is required. Here are the phone numbers to call for interpreter and sign language services, for both providers and members:

For Medi-Cal Managed Care (Medi-Cal) members and providers:

During business hours, call the Customer Care Center at **800-407-4627** (outside Los Angeles county) or **888-285-7801** (inside Los Angeles county).

For Medi-Cal Access Program or Major Risk Medical Insurance Program members and providers:

During business hours, call the Customer Care Center at **800-845-3604**.

After hours requests:

Call the 24/7 NurseLine at **800-224-0336**.

TTY and relay services (for members with hearing loss or speech impairment):

- During business hours, call the TTY line at **888-757-6034**.
- After hours, call the 24/7 NurseLine TTY line at **800-368-4424**.

Working together, we can provide California's diverse patient population with a positive, rewarding experience.

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Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment Key

The attached language self-assessment form is a tool to document the language capability of providers and their staff. It is important that a signed copy be kept on file for each bilingual employee. If there are any changes, please notify Anthem Blue Cross, as this information is shared with members.

Key	Spoken language
(1)	Satisfies elementary needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Able to understand and respond to two- to three-word entry-level questions. May require slow speech and repetition.
(2)	Meets basic conversational needs. Able to understand and respond to simple questions. Can handle casual conversation about work, school, and family. Has difficulty with vocabulary and grammar.
(3)	Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy and vocabulary to have effective formal and informal conversations on most familiar topics related to healthcare.
(4)	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels related to healthcare work needs. Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of his/her experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary. Unaffected by rate of speech.
(5)	Speaks proficiently equivalent to that of an educated native speaker. Has complete fluency in the language, including healthcare topics, such that speech in all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idioms, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural preferences. Usually has received formal education in target language.
Key	Reading
(1)	No functional ability to read. Able to understand and read only a few key words.
(2)	Limited to simple vocabulary and sentence structure.
(3)	Understands conventional topics, non-technical terms, and healthcare terms.
(4)	Understands materials that contain idioms and specialized healthcare terminology; understands a broad range of literature.
(5)	Understands sophisticated materials, including those related to academic, medical, and technical vocabulary.
Key	Writing
(1)	No functional ability to write the language and is only able to write single elementary words.
(2)	Able to write simple sentences. Requires major editing.
(3)	Writes on conventional and simple healthcare topics with few errors in spelling and structure. Requires minor editing.
(4)	Writes on academic, technical, and most healthcare and medical topics with few errors in structure and spelling.
(5)	Writes proficiently equivalent to that of an educated native speaker/writer. Writes with idiomatic ease of expression and feeling for the style of language. Proficient in medical, healthcare, academic and technical vocabulary.
Interpretation vs. translation	<p>Interpretation: Involves spoken communication between two parties, such as between a patient and a pharmacist, or between a family member and doctor.</p> <p>Translation: Involves very different skills from interpretation. A translator takes a written document in one language and changes it into a document in another language, preserving the tone and meaning of the original.</p> <p><i>Source: University of Washington Medical Center</i></p>

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Employee Language Skills Self-Assessment Tool (For Clinical and Non-Clinical Employees)

This self-assessment is intended for clinical and non-clinical employees who are bilingual and communicate with a patient in a language other than English.

Employee's name: _____ Department/job title: _____

Workdays (circle all): Mon / Tues / Wed / Thurs / Fri / Sat / Sun Work hours (please specify): _____

Directions:

1. Write any/all language(s) or dialects you know.
2. Indicate how fluently you speak, read, and/or write each language (see attached key).
3. Specify if you currently use the language regularly as a part of your job responsibilities.

Language	Dialect, region, or country	Fluency: see attached key (Circle)			As part of your job, do you use this language to speak with patients? (Circle)	As part of your job, do you read this language? (Circle)	As part of your job, do you write this language? (Circle)
		Speaking	Reading	Writing			
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Please check off additional qualifications/credentials that support language proficiency level and attach them to this form.

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Note: Per state guideline, bilingual providers and staff who communicate with patients in a language other than English must identify and maintain qualifications of their bilingual capabilities on file:

- Formal language assessment by qualified agency
- Native speaker with a higher education in language, which demonstrates sufficient accuracy and vocabulary in healthcare setting.
- Documentation of successful completion of a specific type of interpreter training
- Documentation of years employed as an interpreter and/or translator
- Other (Please specify): _____

Individuals who rate themselves with speaking, reading, or writing capabilities below level 3 as defined on the Employee Skills Self-Assessment Key, attached to this document, should **not use their bilingual skills or serve** as interpreters and/or translators. For assistance, please contact Anthem Blue Cross for immediate telephonic interpreter assistance.

TO BE SIGNED BY THE PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM

I, _____, attest that the information provided above is accurate.

Date: _____