

# **Will the Hospital Experience for Medical-Surgical Patients with Limited English Proficiency be Improved After Receiving Consistent Interpreter Services?**

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to improve patient satisfaction for medical-surgical inpatients with limited English proficiency by utilizing interpreter services consistently. Research has shown that patient care is negatively impacted when interpreter services are not used effectively.

## **Background**

Though John Muir Medical Center has had a policy in place defining the need and method for interpreter usage among patients with limited English proficiency, it wasn't being utilized consistently. Additionally, when interpreter services were used, documentation of services in the patient record were frequently absent. Prior to the start of this project documentation of use of interpreter services was at about 20% and patient satisfaction (Press Ganey) for interpreter services was in the low 70<sup>th</sup> percentile.

## **Methods**

One to one instruction for registered nurses caring for patients with limited English proficiency on the use of interpreter devices and systems was accomplished by hospital supervisors on all three shifts. Staff providing direct patient care were shown the interpreter policy and tools located on the hospital web site. Staff who needed hands-on instruction for use of interpreter phones were provided that also.

## **Results**

Both patient satisfaction surveys and documentation audits show evidence of improvement. Nursing staff are able to describe the method for accessing and using interpreter services. This project has also generated discussion and appreciation about cultural diversity. We will continue to educate staff and improve interpreter services for our patients.