

# Cultural competency

Training for health care providers

# What is cultural competency?

Cultural competency is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that enable effective work in cross-cultural situations.

# What is cultural awareness?

Cultural awareness is the ability to recognize the cultural factors, norms, values, communication patterns/types, socioeconomic status and world views that shape personal and professional behavior.

# Importance of cultural differences in health care settings

Cultural factors may influence the way individuals:

- Define and evaluate situations.
- Seek help from others.
- Present their problems, situations and information to others.
- Respond to intervention and service plans.

Your level of cultural awareness helps modify your behaviors to respond to the needs of others while maintaining a professional level of respect, objectivity and identity.

# Cultural competency skills

- Listens to others in an unbiased manner; respects other points of view; promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives
- Uses appropriate methods of interacting sensitively, effectively and professionally with persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic and professional backgrounds
- Recognizes the importance of the role cultural, social and behavioral factors play in determining delivery methods for public health services

# Cultural competency skills (cont.)

- Takes into account cultural differences when developing and adapting approaches to problems
- Understands the dynamic forces contributing to cultural diversity
- Understands the importance of a diverse public health workforce

# Our cultural competency philosophy

Create and maintain a culturally competent network that acknowledges and incorporates the following at all levels:

- Value of diversity
- Vigilance about understanding the dynamics resulting from cultural differences
- Continuous expansion of cultural knowledge
- Consistent adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs
- Provider liaison available to help with cultural and linguistic needs

# Amerigroup Community Care is committed to cultural competency

- We have adopted all 15 National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in health care to ensure all members who enter the health care system receive equal, quality and effective treatment. Review the CLAS standards at <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas>.
- We actively recognize and understand the roles age, culture, ability, socioeconomic status and ethnicity play in the lives of our members to ensure equal and effective access to health care, support systems and community services.



# Amerigroup is committed to cultural competency (cont.)

- We recruit and contract with providers who reflect and appreciate the socioeconomic and cultural differences, primary languages spoken, functional abilities, and complex health care and service needs of our members.
- We educate providers to ensure they promote and use interpreter services for members.

# Amerigroup is committed to cultural competency (cont.)

As our contracted health care provider, our expectation is for you and your staff to gain and continually increase knowledge of, skill with, **improve** attitudes about and sensitivities to diverse cultures. This results in effective care and services for all people by taking into account each person's values, reality conditions and linguistic needs.

# Reasons to increase your cultural competency awareness

- The perception of illnesses, diseases and their causes varies by culture
- Belief systems relative to health, healing and wellness are as diverse as the populations we serve
- Culture and socioeconomic concerns influence help-seeking behaviors and attitudes toward health care providers and services
- Individual preferences affect traditional and nontraditional approaches to health care
- Health care providers from culturally and linguistically diverse groups are under-represented in the current delivery system

# You can make a profound difference

- Acknowledge the varied behaviors, beliefs and values of your patients.
- Incorporate those variables into patient assessments, interactions and treatments.

Patients' abilities to communicate symptoms and adhere to recommended treatments will improve in direct relation to your level of cultural competency and awareness.

# What's in it for providers?

- Job satisfaction from seeing better quality of life and health for patients.
- Efficiency in practice operations and appointment availability resulting from fewer repeat calls or visits from patients for the same problems or symptoms.
- Potential for higher quality scores.
- Potential for financial rewards from managed care organizations' quality incentive programs.

# *Cultural Competence Health Practitioner Assessment*

- The *Cultural Competence Health Practitioner Assessment (CCHPA)* was developed by the National Center for Cultural Competence at the request of the Bureau of Primary Health Care, Health Resources and Services Administration, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- It is intended to enhance delivery of high-quality services to culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and underserved communities.
- It promotes cultural and linguistic competence as an essential approach for practitioners to eliminate health disparities among racial and ethnic groups.

# CCHPA results

According to the National Center for Cultural Competence at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, there are numerous benefits to self-assessment:

- Values and belief systems
- Cultural aspects of epidemiology
- Clinical decision-making
- Life-cycle events
- Cross-cultural communication
- Empowerment/health management

Depending on your response pattern, results are provided with a list of resources and suggested learning experiences intended to support your growth in these areas.

# Best practices from our providers

- Guadalupe Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, holds weekly diabetic education classes targeted to the Hispanic population — the most at risk for diabetes.
- Nevada Health Centers, a federally qualified health center, developed their own cultural competency program to address the needs of Hispanic patients with asthma. Within the Hispanic culture, asthma can be viewed as embarrassing or disgraceful, so the care and information this facility provides doesn't use the term *asthma* — to ensure sensitivity and comfort levels with treatment.



# Best practices from our providers (cont.)

Dipika S. Ambani, M.D.

Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and  
Gynecologists in Houston, Texas

“Asian women generally feel more comfortable with female care providers. Sensitivity and care should be taken in situations that may cause patients embarrassment. Patients may expect doctors to have all the answers and make all the decisions. They may have numerous questions about their care, procedures, activities and diet. They get comfort when these questions are answered extensively. Understanding their cultural background, addressing their fears, involving them in their care with plenty of education helps to build patient confidence and enables us to take better care of them.”

# Best practices from our providers (cont.)

Denise Esper, Chief Operating Officer, and Tamarah Duperval-Brownlee, Chief Medical Officer

Lone Star Circle of Care, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Austin, Texas

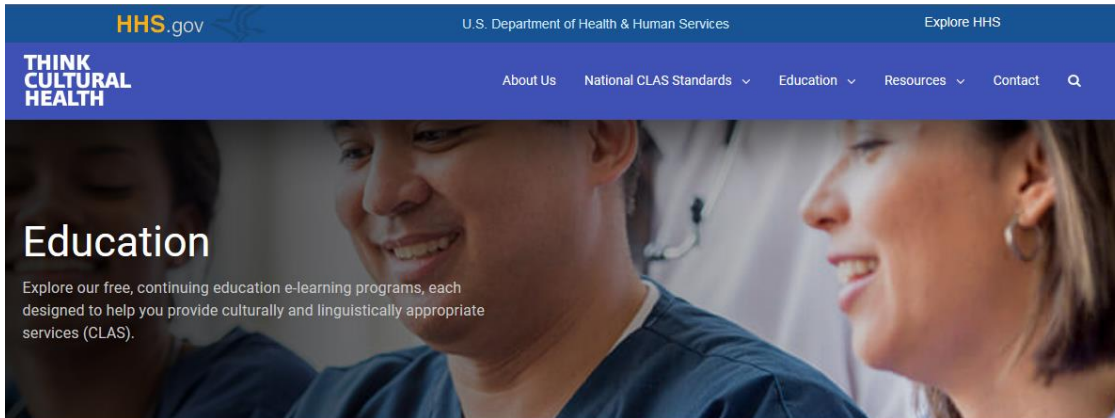
To serve a 2011 patient population of 45.6 percent of Hispanics and 10.5 percent of African-Americans, this center:

- Ensured front-line staff reflected these demographics and language competencies.
- Prioritized providers with high levels of social, cultural and behavioral-factor knowledge in underserved populations (e.g., providers who are members of under-represented groups or demonstrated experience with diverse health environments).

# Best practices from our providers (cont.)

- Ensured patient-centered, culturally appropriate images, educational materials and interventions were tailored and available to these populations.
- Participated in community health events and media targeting minority populations and partnered with health advocate groups like the Latino Health Forum.
- Held a refugee clinic to offer translation and patient-centered health home services to newly arrived immigrants from nearly a dozen countries, including longer appointment times to accommodate translator-patient-provider exchanges (of which patients were not accustomed) and after-hours availability to accommodate nontraditional work schedules and child care concerns.

# Want to learn more?



Obtain *no-cost* continuing medical education credits through further study of cultural competency topics at <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education>.



## Health Care Administrators and Providers

This Communication Guide will help you and your organization interact more effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. The Guide covers strategies for communicating in a way that considers the cultural, health literacy, and language needs of your patients and their families.

[Learn More](#)

# Want to learn more? (cont.)

Review the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development *Cultural and Linguistic Competency Self Assessment Checklist* located at <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/assessments>.

Learn more about the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development *Cultural Competency Organizational Self Assessment* located at <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/assessments>.

Thank you!