

# STATE OF NEW YORK

6288

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

March 7, 2025

Introduced by Sen. LIU -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to requiring hospitals to provide language assistance services

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The public health law is amended by adding a new section  
2 2803-bb to read as follows:

3 § 2803-bb. Provision of language assistance. Every hospital shall  
4 develop a language assistance program to ensure meaningful access to the  
5 hospital's services and reasonable accommodation for all patients who  
6 require language assistance. Program requirements shall include:

7 1. the designation of a language assistance coordinator who shall  
8 report to hospital administration and who shall provide oversight for  
9 the provision of language assistance services;

10 2. policies and procedures that ensure timely identification and ongoing  
11 access for patients in need of language assistance services;

12 3. the development of materials that will be made available for  
13 patients and potential patients that summarize the process and method to  
14 access free language assistance services;

15 4. ongoing education and training for administrative, clinical and  
16 other employees with direct patient care contact regarding the impor-  
17 tance of culturally and linguistically competent service delivery and  
18 how to access the hospital's language assistance services on behalf of  
19 patients;

20 5. signage, as designated by the department, regarding the availabili-  
21 ty of free language assistance services in public entry locations and  
22 other public locations;

23 6. identification of language of preference and language needs of each  
24 patient upon initial visit to the hospital;

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD01392-03-5

1 7. documentation in the medical record of the patient's language of  
2 preference, language needs, and the acceptance or refusal of language  
3 assistance services;

4 8. a provision that family members, friends, or non-hospital personnel  
5 may not act as interpreters, unless:

6 (a) the patient agrees to their use;

7 (b) free interpreter services have been offered by the hospital and  
8 refused; and

9 (c) issues of age, competency, confidentiality, or conflicts of inter-  
10 est are taken into account. Any individual acting as an interpreter  
11 should be sixteen years of age or older; individuals younger than  
12 sixteen years of age shall only be used in emergency circumstances and  
13 their use documented in the medical record;

14 9. management of a resource of skilled interpreters and persons  
15 skilled in communicating with vision and/or hearing-impaired individ-  
16 uals. Interpreters and persons skilled in communicating with vision  
17 and/or hearing-impaired individuals shall be available to patients in  
18 the inpatient and outpatient setting within twenty minutes and to  
19 patients in the emergency service within ten minutes of a request to  
20 hospital administration by the patient, the patient's family or repre-  
21 sentative or the provider of medical care. The commissioner may approve  
22 time limited alternatives to the provisions of this subdivision regard-  
23 ing interpreters and persons skilled in communicating with vision and/or  
24 hearing-impaired individuals for patients of rural hospitals which:

25 (a) demonstrate that they have taken and are continuing to take all  
26 reasonable steps to fulfill these requirements but are not able to  
27 fulfill such requirements immediately for reasons beyond the hospital's  
28 control; and

29 (b) have developed and implemented effective interim plans addressing  
30 the communications needs of individuals in the hospital service area;

31 10. an annual needs assessment utilizing demographic information  
32 available from the United States bureau of the census, hospital adminis-  
33 trative data, school system data, or other sources, that shall identify  
34 limited English-speaking groups comprising more than one percent of the  
35 total hospital service area population. Translations/transcriptions of  
36 significant hospital forms and instructions shall be regularly available  
37 for the languages identified by the needs assessment; and

38 11. reasonable accommodation for a family member or patient's repre-  
39 sentative to be present to assist with the communication assistance  
40 needs for patients with mental and developmental disabilities.

41 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.