

SPEAKING FREELY: PROFESSIONAL HEALTH INTERPRETATION IN LONDON, ON

Access to Health Interpretation Working Group, London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership



Because communication is key to equitable health care

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

- London is a designated destination for newcomers, with immigrants comprising **21% of the population**
- There are over **25,000 requests** for interpretation annually, including over **75 different languages**
- Professional interpretation is variable and inadequate for accessing health care
- Many organizations and providers have **no formal policies or funding** to support interpretation

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- To improve **quality of care** and **clinical outcomes**
- To increase **patient safety** and reduce risk of errors
- To ensure **patient understanding, informed consent**, and collaborative decision-making

WHAT

CAN

WE

DO

?

Funders and Policymakers

- Establish funding models for professional interpretation to support all organizations
- Create legislation and policy mandating professional interpretation in health care
- Develop national standards for professional interpreters

Health Organizations

- Establish formal policies and procedures regarding access to interpretation
- Hire first-language service providers in organizations
- Mandate provider education and training related to the need and process for accessing interpretation
- Measure the use of interpretation as part of health care quality programs
- Involve newcomers in the process and partner with other organizations
- Create collaborative clearinghouses for shared multilingual health resources

Providers

- Increase awareness of need and demand for interpretation
- Establish standardized methods for identifying need for interpretation
- Create empowering environments for immigrants seeking health care