

IMPROVING CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

PEOPLE WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY GETTING CARE AND SCREENINGS¹

The patient-physician interaction can be challenging due to the **communication barrier**.



They are **less likely to have health coverage, a regular health care provider, and get regular care** and screenings for blood pressure, breast cancer, and cervical cancer.



They can experience additional challenges such as:



- Being **older**
- Having **low health literacy**
- Having **fewer community support services**
- **Difficulty asking their health provider questions**

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE HAS IMPROVED FOR PEOPLE WITH LEP BUT REMAINS LOWER COMPARED TO PEOPLE WHO PRIMARILY SPEAK ENGLISH²

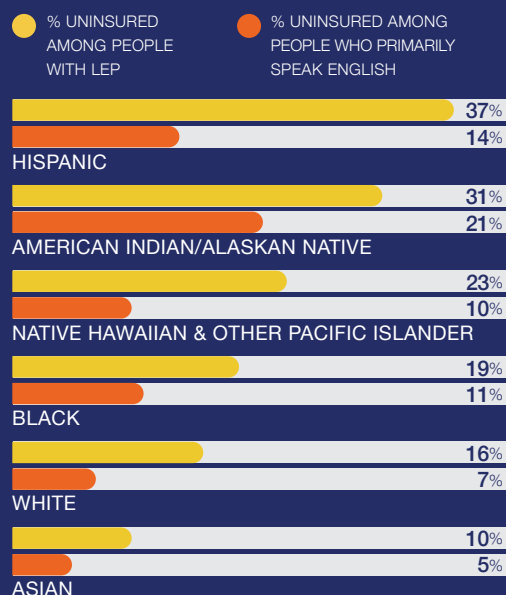
Between 2010 and 2021, the percentage of people with LEP who were uninsured decreased.

46%
↓
29%



People with LEP are still over **3X MORE LIKELY TO BE UNINSURED** than people who primarily speak English.

People with LEP are more likely to be uninsured across all racial and ethnic groups.



LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEP CAN DIRECTLY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH OUTCOMES

Failure to address language, health literacy, and culture can result in:

- ✘ **Misdiagnosis**
- ✘ **Poor management** of health conditions
- ✘ **Difficulty seeking referrals** and other ancillary services³

Medicare-enrolled people with low health literacy have:

- ↑ **Higher hospital admissions** and visits to emergency departments⁴
- 💰 **Higher medical costs**⁵
- ↓ **Lower access to care**⁶



The use of professional interpreters is infrequent in hospitals. Ad hoc interpreters (e.g. friends, family, and staff) are most common for interactions with physicians.⁷

CMS OMH Resources to Address Health Disparities Among People with LEP

- **Coverage to Care** resources provide information to those you serve about their health coverage and available options for primary care services. Resources are available in 9 languages.
- View CMS's **Guide to Developing a Language Access Plan** to ensure your organization is offering high quality services to people with LEP.
- Learn more about how to make health services accessible and equitable from **A Practical Guide to Implementing the National CLAS Standards** and **Building an Organizational Response to Health Disparities**.
- Take the **Introduction to Language Access Plans** web-based training course on the Medicare Learning Network to learn how language access plans affect health care services for people with LEP.

1 Sifuentes AM et al. The Role of Limited English Proficiency and Access to Health Insurance and Health Care in the Affordable Care Act Era. *Health Equity*. 2020; 4(1): 509-517.

2 Kaiser Family Foundation. [Overview of Health Coverage and Care for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\)](#). Accessed 2023.

3 Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Patient Safety Network. [Cultural Competence and Patient Safety](#). Accessed 2023.

4 Cho YI et al. Effects of health literacy on health status and health service utilization amongst the elderly. *Soc Sci Med*. 2008; 66(8): 1809-1816.

5 Howard DH et al. The impact of low health literacy on the medical costs of Medicare managed care enrollees. *Am J Med*. 2005;118(4): 371-377.

6 Sudore RL et al. Limited literacy in older people and disparities in health and healthcare access. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2006;54(5): 770-776.

7 Schenker Y, Pérez-Stable EJ, Nickleach D, Karliner LS. Patterns of interpreter use for hospitalized patients with limited English proficiency. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2011;26(7):712-717. doi:10.1007/s11606-010-1619-z