



CUSTOMER SUCCESS BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL

Language Barriers Hospitals Face

Introduction: The Challenge

In diverse urban centers like the greater Bridgeport area, medical care is full of challenges for the many patients who do not speak English. “Many non-English speakers postpone medical care until their problem becomes an emergency or they don’t receive optimum benefit from their care as a result of the language barriers,” says Lynn Charbonneau, Director of Patient Relations, Bridgeport Hospital. “Other hurdles that we face are the costs associated with language translation; it’s very expensive,” she adds.

One of the biggest issues facing healthcare today is the demand for health services from an increasing number of patients with limited English proficiency (LEP). Healthcare organizations must make certain that language barriers do not impact the quality of care provided to their LEP patients. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 12 million individuals speak English “not well” or “not at all,” and more than 23 million speak English at a level lower than “very well”. The number and diversity of languages is growing rapidly in rural states and counties as well as in urban environments. Between 1990 and 2000, 15 states experienced more than 100 percent growth in their LEP populations. Adding to this growing challenge is the lack of funds and resources hospitals have available and inadequate reimbursement options for language access programs.

Background

Bridgeport Hospital is a private, not-for-profit acute care hospital located in Connecticut’s most populous city, primarily serving patients from Fairfield and New Haven Counties. They serve a large minority population, including Hispanics or Latinos of any race making up 32% of the population, Italian, 8.6%; Irish, 5.1%; Portuguese, 2.9%; Polish, 2.8%; and German, 2.4%.



“Communication is key in all businesses, however it may be a question of life or death when dealing with hospital consent forms, medications, and medical procedures,” notes Charbonneau. “We are a medium-sized hospital with limited resources trying to make a difference for our minority population. Unfortunately this anxiety-provoking scenario plays out routinely in hospitals across the United States.”

Solution

The viaLanguage secure Online Language System (OLS) enables organizations to centralize and dramatically simplify the translation process. Through OLS, organizations can submit language translation projects, get quotes, review translation jobs, retrieve translated materials, and manage billings online 24/7. “We work with healthcare organizations to help them reduce their costs associated with translation,” says Chanin Ballance, CEO of viaLanguage. “Our mission is to reduce language barriers associated with healthcare.”

Working with Bridgeport to fully understand their objectives and needs, viaLanguage provided a streamlined translation solution for two languages – Polish and Portuguese. They translated all critical documents such as consent for treatment, anesthesia consent and notices of privacy.

Through the combination of their linguistic fluency and medical expertise, viaLanguage’s translators ensure health-related information is communicated in an understandable and effective manner specific to the populations Bridgeport serves. Additionally, viaLanguage is familiar with government policy and regulatory compliance, including Title VI.

Results

“Our mission is to improve the quality of life for our patients and with so many non-English speaking members to reach we rely heavily on the speed and accuracy of viaLanguage’s online translation,” concludes Charbonneau.

For more information about Bridgeport Hospital, please visit www.bridgeporthospital.org.

For more information about viaLanguage go to www.vialanguage.com or call 1-800-737-8481.

What Bridgeport is saying about viaLanguage

“Accurate communication is essential to a physician’s ability to obtain a patient’s history, make a correct diagnosis, and reduce medical errors; it is also critical to a patient’s understanding, so he/she can give informed consent and comply with treatment regimens. Through the help of viaLanguage we are one step closer to ensuring equal access to healthcare for all.”

- Lynn Charbonneau,
Bridgeport Hospital