



HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS
C O R P O R A T I O N

"Touching Lives Every Day"

COMPLIANCE ALERT 13-10

Addressing Limited English Proficiency Patients can Lower Readmission Rates

A goal for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is to lower readmission rates and CMS is now targeting and fining hospitals with high readmission rates. HHSC is required by law to provide appropriate interpreter services to LEP patients. And patients with limited English proficiency (LEP) present unique challenges for HHSC facilities.

New Information: A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) released a new study documenting that hospital readmissions occur significantly more among lower income populations and among racial and language minorities, including LEP patients. In addition.

Greater Risks: According to the AHRQ study, LEP patients have a greater risk of:

1. Line infections, surgical infections, falls, and pressure ulcers;
2. Surgical delays and readmission; and
3. Readmissions for certain chronic conditions.

The AHRQ study highlights the importance of effective communication, use of interpreters (including sign language interpreters) during hospital consultations, discharge instructions, and follow-up care. Without effective communication, the study concludes that hospitals can expect to see these and similar patients again, and then run the risk of multi-million dollar Affordable Care Act readmission penalties, which will increase in 2013 and 2014. Further, the study says, the cost of federally required language assistance and accessibility training, policies, and procedures is a bargain when compared to CMS penalties.

Conclusion: The ACA's readmission requirements "create a perfect storm for hospitals' compliance with federal language and accessibility mandates under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and new Joint Commission standards." (MetaPhrasix Newsletter, February 2013).

Source:

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=5zlx8zdab&v=001e5WobZtxxKTm0UZ26I5YUdmV4L432ACfBGlgvYYoi7Io8rTA4lo6uezZYAMhlrNHgcQ1JWVWd3_UyHSBPtmCt1bzcuPFJxihmuXDO_yZUDcj81uF1kx-m5F42uKtHJZyu9w7WIoA5JLEmB3jePmz536OMc1pSupgpwul2tazsbnv7QkesTjK-bMrpGzXdcouoxPiJcEJ_9AyEbN9ANuaR6-Dgh9x9OWLO9_GiLDWq1-0KdfTeOOV1w%3D%3D

"Improving Patient Safety Systems for Patients with Limited English Proficiency." HHS, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, September 2012.