

# Interpretation Services Assessment

2023



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## Assessment Findings

**The 2021 Rock County Community Health Assessment found access to quality healthcare to be a priority area for Rock County residents in the 2022-2024 Community Health Improvement Plan.**

Two focus groups and a survey were conducted in the Rock County area to learn more about the barriers faced by people who utilize interpretation services when obtaining healthcare services. The assessment collected information from 20 focus group participants and 29 survey responses. Most participants indicated speaking a language other than English. Although those who utilize ASL or visual interpretation services were able to participate in the assessment, there were not any participants who indicated using these types of services.

This report provides assessment findings and resources for organizations and their patients to enhance healthcare and interpretation access in Rock County.

## Challenges in Accessing Interpretation Services

**While participants shared a general awareness of interpretation services being available, many cited difficulty accessing quality and timely interpretation services. Consequently, patients often rely on other methods that are more likely to result in miscommunication about their health.**

- Many patients prefer to communicate with healthcare providers in their primary language but often cannot find providers who speak their language.
- The most helpful interpretation services reported were in-person, followed by phone interpretation. Although preferred, barriers were still reported during utilization.
  - In-person interpretation services are often not available for the entire visit and participants report feeling rushed during appointments.
  - Phone interpretation services had reported mixed views of accuracy.
- Participants indicated having a reliance on family members or tools like Google Translate to communicate health needs when interpretation services are not available.
- Interpretation services were difficult to access when contacting non-medical departments within the healthcare system. Services related to billing, insurance, grievances, and scheduling appointments are difficult to access due to the limited information available in one's preferred language and interpretation services. In some cases, miscommunication in these areas led to additional financial stress for patients.

## Information Access and Technology Use

While many indicated having challenges accessing healthcare services, participants indicated that they generally rely on providers to find health information. Due to difficulty in accessing online health portals like MyChart or health information in their preferred language, participants stated they will utilize search engines and social media to find health information. When using online platforms such as Google or Facebook to find health information, people are likely to be faced with false information to verify their health concerns which can lead to harm for the patient.

Participants listed the following to be more helpful in their own language:

- Prescriptions
- After-visit summaries and lab results
- Diagnosis information
- Explanation of benefits



## Health Literacy

**Navigating the healthcare system was an evident area of improvement for patients receiving care including how to access affordable healthcare, health insurance, and scheduling appointments.**

- Cultural barriers between participants and healthcare staff were cited to participants feeling dismissed by healthcare staff.
- Cultural humility was determined as an immediate need specifically within mental health services to be able to accurately treat mental health challenges and improve upon the mental health disparities faced by women who are immigrants.

# Resources for Organizations

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The following resources for organizations and patients were compiled in response to the assessment findings to improve the needs identified.

## Funding for Interpretation Signage

Funding is available to Rock County healthcare systems that want to improve signage of their available interpretation services. Signage aligns with [Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Civil Rights: Limited English Proficiency Resources](#) in the form of I-Speak cards for qualified healthcare staff or language interpretation posters for reception area displays. Funding will be available until depleted or when funding ceases **May 1, 2025**.

## Fluency Assessments and Medical Interpreter Certification

- **Bilingual Fluency Assessment for Staff:** Evaluates a healthcare employee's level of fluency in English and the target language. Tests the knowledge of terms commonly used in a healthcare setting, as well as grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and accent. Once completed, staff can communicate in the target language at work without an interpreter. Staff cannot serve as medical interpreters or speak to patients in the target language in a clinical setting as it is not a certificate.
- **Bilingual Fluency Assessment for Clinicians:** Evaluates a clinician's level of fluency in English and the target language. Tests their knowledge of high-level medical terminology to ensure proficiency in the target language and professional communications in their role. Upon completion, clinicians will be able to conduct patient encounters in the target language without a certified medical interpreter. Clinicians will not be eligible to serve as medical interpreters for other clinicians.
- **Medical Interpreter Certification:** Certification to ensure a high level of fluency in target language and effective communication between providers and patients to prevent adverse effects. A certification promotes safety, trust, and ensures compliance with prescribed care.

## Cultural Humility

- **Organizational Health Literacy Assessment:** Service by Wisconsin Health Literacy to review institutional policies, practices, communications, navigation, and norms to improve the organization's health literacy environment. [wisconsinliteracy.org](http://wisconsinliteracy.org)
- **Prejudice Habit Breaking Intervention Training:** Learn evidence-based interventions to overcome unintentional bias, prejudice, and stereotyping in everyday life. This is the **first and only** intervention to show long-term effectiveness up to, at least, 2-3 years. Service provided by various Rock County organizations. [Prejudice and Intergroup Relations Lab – UW–Madison \(wisc.edu\)](http://Prejudice and Intergroup Relations Lab – UW–Madison (wisc.edu))
- **National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center:** Self-paced or organizational trainings. [lgbtqihealtheducation.org](http://lgbtqihealtheducation.org)
- **Health Information Translations:** Provides translated resources in 15+ languages for health promotion. [healthinfotranslations.org](http://healthinfotranslations.org)
- **Think Cultural Health:** Offers continuing education units for various healthcare professions including administrators, providers, nurses, maternal, oral, and behavioral health professionals, social workers, and community health workers (promotores de salud). [thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education](http://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education)



# Resources for Patients

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## Finding Health Insurance

- **Rock County's Live Healthy Discount Program:** Provides prescription, health, and dental discounts for Rock County residents. [livehealthycard.com](https://livehealthycard.com)
- **Covering Wisconsin Rock County:** Offers free help with health insurance sign-up and information. [coveringwi.org/tool](https://coveringwi.org/tool)
- **Southern Consortium:** Assists with healthcare coverage and other support services. [Southern Consortium | Rock County, WI](https://SouthernConsortium.org/RockCounty,WI)
- **Health Insurance Marketplace:** Federal health insurance program for eligible U.S. residents. [HealthCare.gov](https://HealthCare.gov)

## Health Information in Spanish or Other Languages

- **Nemours Kids Health:** Offers parenting advice from pregnancy to teen years. [KidsHealth.org/es](https://KidsHealth.org/es)
- **HispanicHealth.info:** Provides resources in Spanish and English. [HispanicHealth.info/](https://HispanicHealth.info/)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** Offers health information in Spanish. [CDC.gov/Spanish](https://CDC.gov/Spanish)
- **MedlinePlus:** Provides health information in multiple languages. [MedlinePlus.gov/Spanish](https://MedlinePlus.gov/Spanish)

## Self-Advocacy Tools

- **Health Literacy Modules:** Educational modules on self-advocacy for youth and adults.
  - [🌐 Navigating the Healthcare System](#)
- **Patient Portal Trainings:** Guides for using various patient portals like MyChart to access your health information.
  - MyChart Training Videos: [🌐 MyChart How-To Videos](#)
  - Spanish MyChart Training Video:
    - [🌐 MyChart Epics Patient to Provider Portal \(Spanish Language\)](#)
    - [🌐 Teleconsulta en MyChart - MyChart Video Visits with Spanish Translation \(For Mobile Devi...](#)
  - MyHealth Patient Portal Guide (Oracle Health): [🌐 User Guide](#)
  - athenahealth Patient Portal Welcome Video: [🌐 Patient Portal Welcome | athenahealth](#)

## Contact Us

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For 2024 Community Health Assessment results and more Rock County data, visit [HealthyRockWI.org](https://HealthyRockWI.org). Questions and comments regarding this report can be emailed to [HEARCoordinator@co.rock.wi.us](mailto:HEARCoordinator@co.rock.wi.us).

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