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# Providing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services

## Policy

Meigs County Health Department (MCHD) will provide effective, equitable, understandable and respectful quality public health services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.

MCHD staff will treat all persons with courtesy and respect without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, military status, marital status, income level, or insurance status. Services will be provided in manners that are responsive to the health care beliefs, practices, and needs of diverse clients and that advance health equity and reduce health care disparities.

MCHD staff will clearly and consistently communicate with clients in languages or forms they can reasonably understand. Communications will be facilitated by utilizing interpreters or other communication aides as needed, and by providing written materials in a client's preferred language.

MCHD will periodically conduct cultural self-assessment to determine the degree to which its values, policies, structures, and practices are culturally and linguistically competent and to develop a plan for further building competency. According to the *US Census Bureau*, approximately 97% of Meigs County, Ohio residents identify as White non-Hispanic.

## Purpose

To establish internal standards and procedures that reflect the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS).

## Procedures

1. As part of the comprehensive Community Health Assessment process, senior management, supervisors, and the Maternal & Child Health Program (MCHP) director will:
  - a. Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to identify the languages and cultures that MCHD staff are most likely to encounter in the course of their duties.
  - b. Assess the resources available to assist staff in providing culturally competent services (e.g., types of interpretation and translation services available) and prepare a comprehensive list that all staff can access as needed.
  - c. Assess the cultural and linguistic competency of the MCHD staff annually, through CLAS self-assessment tools, such as the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) *Self-Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services*.
2. Senior management, supervisors, and the MCHP director will convene a workgroup as needed to develop, implement, monitor, and revise an internal plan that reflects the MCHD's CLAS self-assessment.
  - a. One single CLAS plan will be created for the entire MCHD.

- b. This CLAS Plan will be utilized by all MCHD programs required to submit a CLAS Plan to the ODH as a grant requirement.
  - c. Senior management, supervisors, and the MCHP director will be responsible for collaborating with staff to implement, monitor, and update this plan as needed.
3. The Workforce Development Coordinator and Team will use the assessment data and CLAS Plan to inform workforce development activities outlined in the MCHD's Workforce Development Plan.
    - a. All staff shall participate in annual cultural competency/diversity training. This entails mandatory attendance that is recorded via sign-in attendance log, and will be kept on file with Workforce Development Coordinator.
    - b. Employees must submit a copy of any training certificate or attendance document to their supervisor or the Workforce Development Coordinator for placement in their personnel file.
    - c. Employee and immediate supervisor will monitor completion of cultural competency training by reviewing and maintaining a Training & Certification Record annually as part of the performance evaluation process.
    - d. New employees will be required to complete New Employee CLAS Orientation (as part of new employee orientation activities) performed by MCHP Director.
  4. Senior management, supervisors, and the MCHP director will convene a workgroup as needed to assess and improve the information and education materials utilized by MCHD staff. This group will ensure Health Department educational materials meet the cultural and linguistic need of the populations being served. Information regarding cultural and linguistic questions on the client satisfaction survey, feedback from clients, and any other evaluation results will be shared with MCHD staff through staff meetings, email communication, or other methods as necessary.
  5. Any changes or updates to this policy will be provided to the Board of Health for its approval.

## Definitions

Language Line: An interpreter service available via telephone (1-800-752-6096) to be used when a qualified interpreter in the required language is not available. (Demonstration Line is 1-800-996-8808)

Cultural Competency: A developmental process in which individuals or institutions achieve increasing levels of awareness, knowledge, and skills along a cultural competence continuum. Cultural competence involves valuing diversity, conducting self-assessments, avoiding stereotypes, managing the dynamics of difference, acquiring and institutionalizing cultural knowledge, and adapting to diversity and cultural contexts in communities. (National CLAS Standards)

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS): Services that are respectful of and responsive to individual cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy levels, and communication needs and used by all members of an organization (regardless of size) at every point of contact. (National CLAS Standards)

CLAS Standards: The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (The National CLAS Standards) aim to improve health care quality and advance health equity by establishing a blueprint for health and health care organizations.

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Culture: The integrated pattern of thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions associated, wholly or partially, with racial, ethnic, or linguistic groups as well as religious, spiritual, biological, geographical, or sociological characteristics. Culture is dynamic in nature, and individuals may identify with multiple cultures over the course of their lifetimes. (National CLAS Standards)

Limited English Proficiency: A concept referring to a level of English proficiency that is insufficient to ensure equal access to public services without language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter. (National CLAS Standards)

Linguistic Competency: The capacity of individuals or institutions to communicate effectively at every point of contact. Effective communication includes the ability to convey information — both written and oral — in a manner that is easily understood by diverse groups, including persons of limited English proficiency, those who have low literacy skills or who are not literate, those having low health literacy, those with disabilities, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing. (National CLAS Standards)

## References

National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (The National CLAS Standards) <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/Content/clas.asp>;  
<https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/pdfs/EnhancedNationalCLASStandards.pdf>

APPROVED BY:

Marc Barr, Health Commissioner

10-8-19

Date

Roger Gaul, Board of Health President

10/8/19

Date

## Appendices:

1. List of translators
2. Blank translator form
3. New employee checkoff
4. CLAS Strategic Plan template
5. ODH's CLAS Self-Assessment tool

**Current Status:**

**Adoption:**

**Approved:**

**Last Revised: 10/07/2019**

