

# Chapter 4:

## Cultural Competency

Review/Revised: 01/18, 01/19, 01/20, 06/20, 01/21, 04/21, 01/22, 10/22, 02/23

CMS requires BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway to make certain its providers ensure that all services, both clinical and non-clinical, are provided in a culturally competent manner and are accessible to all members, including those with limited English proficiency, limited reading skills, hearing incapacity, or those with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Examples of how a Medicare Advantage organization can meet these accessibility requirements include providing translation and interpreter services, TTY connections, or sign language, including the provision of auxiliary aids and alternative formats upon request, and at no cost to the member.

### 4.0 NON-DISCRIMINATION

Members enrolled in BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway have the right to be treated with respect and with recognition of the member's dignity and need for privacy; to not be discriminated against in the delivery of health care services based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, age, gender, gender identity, genetic information or source of payment; to have services provided in a culturally competent manner, with consideration for members with limited English proficiency or reading skills, and members with visual or auditory limitations.

The delivery of culturally responsive health care and services requires health care providers and/or employees to possess a set of attitudes, skills, behaviors, and policies which enable the organization and staff to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. It reflects an understanding of the need for acquiring and using knowledge of the unique health-related beliefs, attitudes, practices, and communication patterns to improve services, strengthen programs, increase community participation, and eliminate disparities in health status among diverse population groups.

BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway is committed to providing access to high quality services in a culturally competent manner. Cultural competency generally refers to the provision of high quality, medically necessary health care services without regard to religious, racial, ethnic or social group and within the context of diverse human behavior. Diverse human behavior includes thought, communication, actions, customs, beliefs and values.

## 4.1 LINGUISTIC SERVICES

BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway offers interpretation and translation services to BCBSAZ Pathway members at no cost to them when they are communicating with BCBSAZ Pathway staff such as Member Services. The provider should check the patient's language needs prior to scheduling an appointment to make the appropriate language arrangements to satisfy their needs.

- These services must be accurate, timely, and protect the privacy and independence of the individual with limited English proficiency.
- The translation/interpretation services shall be provided by a qualified interpreter/translator.
- Members are not permitted to rely on a minor child for translation/interpretation except in an emergency when there is no qualified interpreter immediately available.

BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway and subcontracted providers must make oral interpretation services and translation services available to persons and/or their families with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) at all points of contact. This is to ensure appropriate delivery of mental health and physical health services for individuals. Oral interpretation and sign language (ASL) services are provided at no charge to the member and/or the member's family seven days a week, 365 days a year. These services ensure access to qualified interpreters trained in health care terminology.

Oral interpretive services must be provided by: qualified interpreter staff, qualified bilingual staff, contracted qualified interpreters, telephone interpretation services, video remote interpretation services, or from a qualified individual provider office, agency, or facility. Sign language services are to be provided by licensed interpreters for the deaf and the hard of hearing pursuant to A.R.S. § 36-1946.

If you need additional information related to interpretation services, please visit the Health Choice Pathway website at: [Cultural Competency - BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway](#).

## 4.2 ASK ME 3

BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway supports and highly recommends the Ask Me 3 program. As described on the Ask Me 3 webpage, the program encourages patients to ask and understand 3 basic questions:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

You can learn more about this patient education program online at [Ask Me 3: Good Questions for Your Good Health | IHI - Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#)

### **4.3 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

For additional resources, links, and educational material on Cultural Competency, please visit the BCBSAZ Health Choice Pathway website Provider section at

<https://www.healthchoicepathway.com>.