

VDH, 2010 LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT
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WHAT IS THE LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

This Virginia Department of Health, *2010 Language Needs Assessment Report* captures limited English proficiency (LEP) population data unique to Virginia's 35 local health districts for 2007-2008. The report identifies district LEP populations and outlines recommendations to consider as each district reviews its plan of action to address local language barriers and increase health care quality to all LEP patients while meeting all federal requirements.

Who Conducts the Assessment?

The report, conducted by the Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) Office of Minority Health and Health Equity (OMHHE,) provides highlights governing LEP guidelines and addresses recommendations for future analysis.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

The language needs assessment is primarily a data-based report. The assessment relies heavily on data collected from various sources to make its conclusions. Despite efforts to ensure the validity and reliability of all data used, the assessment recognizes and accounts for the tendency for errors in data collection and estimation.

What are the Data sources?

- The US Census 2005 - 2007 American Community Survey (ACS) which is a nationwide survey. The ACS collects and produces population, language and housing information every year.
- The Virginia Department of Education (DOE) data on Virginia's student LEP participants in the 2008 English as a Second Language (ESL) program. ESL is a Virginia public school program designed to help LEP students learn English as a part of their daily school curriculum.
- VDH contracted with Language Services Associates (LSA) in 2007 to provide districts with cost-effective telephonic interpretation and translation services. The local health district's 2008 LSA usage data that includes detailed call statistics has been included in the district's report to inform them of their utilization of telephonic interpretation services.
- The VDH Web Vision system which accumulates all district patient visits, also termed encounters, (total encounters and unduplicated patients) within a district. Web Vision also tracks detailed district statistics to include: patient information, patient encounters and patient primary language.

How will OMHHE address future limitations in reporting?

- OMHHE will explore various methods such as local interviews, surveys, etc., to integrate district specific LEP activities and needs identified by clients, local experts and partners.
- Also, future editions will examine language needs in environmental health programs (e.g. restaurants in which owners do not speak English.)

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HOW OFTEN THE LANGUAGE IS NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED?

The language needs assessment will be conducted every two-three years. (Depending upon staffing resources.) The report was first issued in 2007.

WHY IS THE LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT NECESSARY?

During the 2008 reporting year, VDH reported 70,633 unduplicated limited English proficient (LEP) patients and a total of 493,811 LEP encounters compared to 1,602,741 unduplicated English patients and 5,475,411 English encounters. These numbers reflect the need to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health care, which is federally mandated by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166 of 2000 and the National Standards on culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Health Care issued by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health in 2000. The assessment, by making recommendations based on its findings and the federal guidelines, works to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate health services in Virginia.

Legal requirements notwithstanding, health care quality research has shown that providing meaningful language access can and does improve health outcomes, increase patient compliance, improve cost effectiveness of health care delivery, increase patient satisfaction and increase access to health care.

The assessment has found that significant numbers of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals live in Virginia and use VDH services. This tool will help VDH to continue addressing local language barriers and increase health care quality to all Virginians, which include LEP patients.

HOW IS THE LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT TO ME?

The language needs assessment is important because it ensures compliance with federal law for culturally and linguistically appropriate health care. The assessment identifies district LEP populations and outlines recommendations for each district review as each district plans to address local language barriers and increase health care quality to all LEP.

For non-VDH readers, the assessment provides an interesting and useful documentation of the Commonwealth's language needs, about what can be done to meet the needs of the LEP population in the Commonwealth.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING FINDINGS OF THE 2010 VDH LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

At the state level, the 2010 language needs assessment found:

- Virginia health districts served patients who **spoke nearly 100 different languages in 2008.**
- The **top 10 non-English languages** encountered were: Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean, Farsi, Urdu, Burmese, Amharic, Mandarin and Somali.
- **Two districts serving the greatest patient language diversity** include Fairfax and Thomas Jefferson Health District offices.

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- Fairfax is the **most linguistically diverse district having** served 98 different languages.
- Thomas Jefferson Health District utilized the telephonic interpretation services to **provide more than 3200 calls and** linguistically serve more than **27 languages** in 2008.
- Fairfax Health District has **154,425 LEP individual residents**, comprising **15%** of the total district population, according to 2008 estimates.

At the district level, the 2010 language needs assessment made recommendations:

- For interpreters and/or translators in 18 health districts.
- Of these recommendations, 9 are new for 2010.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- More information, including detailed reports for each health district, can be found at VDH's Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Health Care (CLAS Act) website at www.clasactvirginia.org.
- Still have questions? For additional information regarding this report: call 804-864-7435, or <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ohpp/clasact/LanguageProfile.aspx> or contact: OMHHE, 109 Governor Street, Suite 1016E, Richmond, VA 23219.