

## Providers could experience a shortage of interpreters beginning July 30

Health-care and vocational services providers may encounter a temporary shortage of certified/authorized interpreters beginning July 30, 2019. This is due to a Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) rule that set new requirements for continuing certification.<sup>i</sup>

### What does this mean for providers who use interpreters?

- Interpreters without certification/authorization may still offer their services to you. If you use their services, they may bill your practice. This is because interpreters must be certified/authorized in order to be paid by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I).

### Interpreter services covered by L&I

- **Interpreter Lookup Service.** To find an interpreter, go to [www.fortress.wa.gov/lni/ils/](http://www.fortress.wa.gov/lni/ils/). Be sure to confirm that the interpreter is certified/authorized before using their services.
- **Phone interpretation services.** Health-care and vocational providers can call 877-626-0678 to request services through Language Link. **Please note:** Video remote services are no longer available.

### Interpreter services *not* covered by L&I

- **Noncertified/unauthorized interpreters.** As a last resort, if you can't find a professional interpreter, you can get help from the people listed below. However, L&I will **not** pay for these services and strongly discourages their use. Options include:
  - Family members over age 18
  - Friend or acquaintance
  - Health-care provider or an employee whose primary job is not interpretation
  - Vocational provider or an employee who is not a credentialed interpreter or translator

Independent Medical Examiners (IMEs) must continue to follow the Medical Examiners Handbook.<sup>ii</sup>

### How can I find out more?

Check L&I's web site for updates and information: [www.Lni.wa.gov/Interpreters](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Interpreters)

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<sup>i</sup> [WAC 388-03-160](#). Among other requirements, the 2015 rule raised the standards for continuing education and set a four-year credentialing timeframe. If interpreters do not fulfill requirements, their certificate expires on July 29, 2019.

<sup>ii</sup> [WAC 296-23-362\(3\)](#) prohibits the use of family or friends for IMEs.