

Interpreter services

The Doctors Priority Line is a fee free service for eligible doctors or specialists to help them communicate with patients who do not speak English. It provides a prompt telephone interpreting service for medical practitioners and their eligible patients.

Who can use the Doctors Priority Line?

The Doctors Priority Line is provided to assist **doctors** with their non-English speaking patients. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, through TIS (Translating and Interpreting Service) provides this **fee-free** service, in order to help provide better access to health care for certain non-English speaking people. The Doctors Priority Line provides prompt telephone interpreting services for **eligible medical practitioners** in private practice.

Call 1300 131 450

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call.

Which doctors are eligible?

Any doctor that meets the following criteria can use the service:

The consultation must be claimable under Medicare.

The doctor must be consulting as a medical practitioner in private practice.

If you have not called 1300 131 450 previously you will be provided with a client number which you will be required to use in future calls.

The service must be provided to a non-English speaking permanent resident or Australian citizen.

When using the Doctors Priority Line

You can call Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) from any ordinary phone. This is adequate for emergency or occasional calls.

If you regularly deal with patients who do not speak English, you should consider using a hands free telephone or dual handset (two telephones connected to one telephone line) or an adaptor to enable efficient communication.

When using an ordinary phone, speak to the interpreter then hand the telephone back to the patient.

When using a dual handset or a hands free telephone, sit facing your patient.

Before the consultation

Introduce yourself to the interpreter.

Brief the interpreter and describe the type of telephone equipment you

are using and where you are (private rooms, hospital ward etc).
Introduce yourself and the interpreter to the patient.

During the consultation

Speak in the first person (say "How do you feel?" rather than "Ask her how she feels").

Do not have private conversations with the interpreter in the patient's presence - do this before they arrive or after they leave.

Pause often to allow the interpreter to speak.

Keep the amount to be interpreted short.

Choose your words carefully and use an appropriate tone of voice.

Sit facing your patient.

Be aware of your body language and use plenty of non-verbal reassurance, smiles and other gestures of encouragement.

Speak in a natural tone of voice - it is a language problem you are dealing with, not a hearing difficulty.

If the consultation is going to be a long one (recommended no more than an hour), make sure you give the interpreter a few minutes break on the half hour.

Clearly indicate the end of the session to the interpreter.

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Staff Development

I, _____ have been trained in _____
and am now competent in performing duties related to this topic. I have had verbal instruction/hands-on training and have read the appropriate policy and procedures in relation to this topic.

Staff Signature _____ date _____