



**Office of Minority & Multicultural Health  
Circular**

<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> January 1, 2017
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<b>POLICY #:</b> OMMH	<b>SUBJECT:</b> Cultural Competence CLAS Policy and Practice
<b>SUPERCEDES:</b> N/A – New	<b>CATEGORY:</b> Communication
<b>LAST REVIEW DATE:</b> N/A – New	<b>LAST REVISION DATE:</b> 10/19/16
<b>DATE OF COMPLIANCE:</b>	<b>CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES:</b> M. Carolyn Daniels, Executive Director Office of Minority & Multicultural Health (609) 292-6962 <a href="mailto:Carolyn.Daniels@doh.nj.gov">Carolyn.Daniels@doh.nj.gov</a>
<b>PROCEDURE(S):</b> YES/NO	<b>DISTRIBUTION:</b> All Staff
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> YES/NO	

**I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the New Jersey Department of Health’s policies, programs, services, materials, and processes address social, cultural, and language differences as defined in the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS), in an effort to enhance the Department’s ability to provide the most effective programs and services to meet the needs of the population.

Additionally, this policy is being implemented to ensure that culturally competent services meet the standards and measures established by the Public Health Accreditation Board in Domains 3, 7, and 11 (see Section I.B.C.).

- A. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Minority Health/Think Cultural Health 2013 Enhanced National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care, (<https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>)



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1. There are 15 CLAS Standards. However, the first Standard serves as the frame and essential goal that links the other 14 Standards together. If the other 14 Standards are adopted, implemented, and maintained, the Principal Standard will be achieved.

**Principal Standard #1:** Provide effective, equitable, understandable, respectful, and quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred language, health literacy, and other communication needs.

2. The 14 remaining standards are categorized into three themes: Theme 1- Governance, Leadership and Workforce; Theme 2- Communication and Language Assistance; and Theme 3- Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability.

**Governance, Leadership and Workforce-** emphasizes the importance of the implementation of CLAS as a systemic responsibility, requiring the investment, support, and training of all individuals within an organization.

**Communication and Language Assistance-** broadens the understanding and application of appropriate services to include all communication needs and services, including sign language, braille, oral interpretation, and written translation.

**Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability-** underscores the importance of establishing individual responsibility in ensuring that CLAS is supported, while retaining the understanding that effective delivery of CLAS demands actions across an organization. It focuses on the supports necessary for adoption, implementation, and maintenance of culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and services regardless of one's role within an organization or practice. All individuals are accountable for upholding the values and intent of the National CLAS Standards.

### B. Public Health Accreditation Standards and Measures (version 1.0):

1. Domain 3, Standard 3.2, Measure 3.2.5:
  1. "Provide accessible, accurate, actionable, and current information in culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate formats for populations served by the health department."
2. Domain 7, Standard 7.2, Measure 7.2.3:
  1. "Lead or collaborate in culturally competent initiatives to increase access to health care services for those who may experience barriers due to cultural, language, or literacy differences."
3. Domain 11, Standard 11.1, Measure 11.1.3:



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1. “Maintain socially, culturally, and linguistically appropriate approaches in health department processes, programs, and interventions, relevant to the population served in its jurisdiction.”

### II. SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:

- A. This policy applies to all branches, divisions, sections, programs and units within the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH).

### III. POLICY:

- A. It is the policy of NJDOH to ensure community members cultural and linguistic values are acknowledged and supported when community members interact with employees and contractors of the NJDOH.
- B. It is the policy of NJDOH to provide interpretation, translation, assistive devices (for example, TTY for the hearing impaired), and/or other specific communication services to community members when interacting with employees and contractors of the NJDOH.
- C. It is the policy of NJDOH to ensure communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate as identified through the CLAS standards. This includes, but is not limited to, internal communications, such as Standard Operating Procedures, Memos, Presentations, and Work Plans. This also includes, but is not limited to, external communications, such as: Posters, Health Education Material, Presentations, Social Media, Requests for Proposals, and Correspondence.
- D. It is the policy of NJDOH to assess cultural and linguistic competence within the Department to identify areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement.
- E. It is the policy of NJDOH to ensure employees and contractors have access to Cultural Competence education materials relevant to the social, cultural and linguistic characteristics of community members, such as the CLAS Blueprint (letter “E” in key resources below).
- F. It is the policy of NJDOH to ensure grantees provide culturally and linguistic competent services for community members.
- G. It is the policy of NJDOH to serve as an information and resource center for racial and ethnic minority specific health information and data (per N.J.S.A 26:2-162(3)(c
- H. It is the policy of NJDOH to collaborate with colleges of medicine and dentistry, and other health care professional training programs, to consult regarding cultural and



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linguistic competency courses designed to address disparity in health care access, utilization, treatment decisions, quality and outcomes (per N.J.S.A 26:2-162(3)(j)).

### IV. **PROCESS:**

- A. The Office of Minority and Multicultural Health is available to provide support and guidance to all NJDOH branches, divisions, sections, programs and units as they work to implement this policy.
- B. The Office of Minority and Multicultural Health (OMMH) ensures access to National CLAS standards is readily available to all NJDOH employees, key stakeholders, and community partners through the OMMH website. (letter “D” in key resources below)

### V. **KEY RESOURCES:**

- A. N.J.S.A 26:2-160-167.3
  - 1. <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/2013/title-26>
- B. National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care:
  - 1. <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/Content/clas.asp>
- C. Public Health Accreditation Board Standards and Measures version 1.0:
  - 1. <http://www.phaboard.org/wp-content/uploads/PHAB-Standards-and-Measures-Version-1.0.pdf>
- D. NJDOH Office of Minority and Multicultural Health Website:
  - 1. <http://www.nj.gov/health/ommh/index.shtml>
- E. NJDOH Office of Minority and Multicultural Health CLAS Blueprint:
  - 1. [http://www.nj.gov/health/ommh/documents/clas\\_standards.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/ommh/documents/clas_standards.pdf)
- F. NJDOH State Health Assessment Data (aka “SHAD”):
  - 1. <https://www26.state.nj.us/doh-shad/home/Welcome.html>
- G. U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section, “ADA Requirements: Effective Communication”
  - 1. <https://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm>