

Enhanced Interpretation Services  
Final Report to Illinois Community Health Foundation  
February 2018

With the generous support of the Illinois Community Health Foundation (ICHF), Heartland Health Centers (HHC) implemented *Enhanced Interpretation Services*, a three-fold approach to addressing the triple threat to communication for immigrant and refugee patients. As laid out in our grant application, HHC worked to expand the use of video interpretation services, install dual handset phones, and pilot tailored in-person interpretation services.

HHC completed a 40-day pilot of video interpretation at HHC-Wilson and HHC-Devon in March 2017. The pilot had promising outcomes: two-thirds of providers surveyed said they had a better understanding of their patients' needs with video interpretation compared to telephonic interpretation, and 80% of patients said they understood their health problems fairly well or very well because of video interpretation. The pilot revealed some unanticipated internet connectivity challenges that HHC needed to resolve in order to continue using video interpretation. First, HHC increased its internet bandwidth at HHC-Wilson and HHC-Devon to ensure the internet connection could support the simultaneous use of video interpretation and the electronic medical record system. Second, HHC had to increase the number of internet access points at HHC-Wilson; the large, cavernous nature of the building makes maintaining a strong internet connection challenging. This process involved installing new cabling and conduits and was completed in August. HHC hired a technology consultant to make these improvements to our infrastructure. The cost of the consultant, the increased bandwidth, and the new cabling/conduits was significantly higher than expected—\$35,000 instead of \$6,000—which HHC paid for out of general operating funds. (See attached budget.)

Once the upgrades were completed, HHC purchased six InDemand devices using ICHF grant funds, making video interpretation a sustainable option for providers and care teams. Actual cost of the devices was less than expected, so HHC was able to purchase six devices for \$15,500, instead of four for \$15,300. Other sites expressed interest in using video interpretation, and HHC realized it could spread the impact by locating a few devices at other sites. Therefore, HHC-Wilson and HHC-Devon have two devices each, while two other sites with large immigrant and refugee populations are each receiving one device (HHC-Sullivan, a school based site, and HHC-Albany Park).

HHC planned to relaunch video interpretation in the fall of 2017. The Manager of Cultural Competency Programs left the organization in August, however, which slowed progress toward program goals. HHC is excited that Dalia Galvan Morales filled the position beginning February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Dalia has been with HHC for four years and has previously led our Outreach and Enrollment Team with great success. She will lead the re-launch of video interpretation across the four sites in March and will continue the evaluation started in 2017.

While HHC worked to address the technological issues, it began making progress on the other two strategies: dual handset phones and in-person interpretation. To maximize the impact of the dual handset phones, the Manager of Cultural Competency Programs sought input from HHC's

Immigrant and Refugee Working Group. The benefit of dual handset phones is that they improve confidentiality, as patients do not have to put the call on speaker phone or pass a phone back and forth with the staff person. The Working Group felt that these handsets would be most impactful for Patient Support Specialists (PSS's) at the front desk. PSS's discuss personal information with patients—such as income, insurance status, purpose of visit, etc.—in the public setting of the waiting room. HHC purchased and installed seven dual handset phones—one for the front desk in seven of HHC's health centers. The handsets were more expensive than expected due to compatibility issues with the HHC phone system. In total they cost \$5,667, \$5,000 of which was covered by ICHF funding. HHC is in the process of installing these handsets, and the new Manager of Cultural Competency Programs will train PSS's to ensure they maximize use of this new tool.

HHC also began piloting in-person medical interpretation. Patient/provider data were analyzed, and English-only speaking providers with high numbers of patients who prefer a language other than English were identified. One of those was very excited to try in-person interpretation. HHC purchased this interpretation service from Cross Cultural Interpreting Services, a company under contract with HHC for telephonic interpretation. So far, six sessions have been completed with the provider and in-person interpreter.

HHC experienced a number of successes, as outlined above. There is buy-in from providers and staff for the use of enhanced and tailored interpretation services, including from additional HHC sites that have heard about the success of these services. Patients reported positive experiences with video interpretation. The primary challenges were addressing the tech difficulties explained above and maintaining progress during the staffing transition. HHC will implement a second evaluation now that the program is fully staffed.

HHC is committed to providing innovative and high-quality care for immigrants and refugees and will continue to address any challenges to achieve effective communication with patients. HHC appreciates the generous support from the Illinois Community Health Foundation that enables the organization to do this important work.

Heartland Health Centers' Enhanced Interpretation Services  
 Budget Report for Illinois Community Health Foundation  
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Expenditure	Description	CY2017 REQUEST			CY2017 ACTUAL	
		Total Estimate	Other Sources	ICHF Request	Total Cost	ICHF Portion
Equipment	4 InDemand devices	\$15,300		\$16,520	\$15,500	\$15,000
	8 dual handset phones and installation	\$1,220			\$5667	\$5,000
Personnel	Manager of Cultural Competency (.45 FTE)	\$14,000	\$14,000		\$14,000	
Consultants	In-person medical interpretation	\$3,480		\$3,480	\$1000	
	Technology consultant	\$6,000	\$6,000		\$35,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$71,167</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

Notes:

- HHC purchased 6 InDemand devices instead of 4 for a total of \$15,500. Actual costs were less than projected which allowed HHC to purchase all of the InDemand devices.
- HHC purchased and installed 7 dual handset phones – one for use in public areas of 7 of HHC’s health centers – for a total of \$5667. The handsets were more expensive due to compatibility issues with the HHC phone system.
- Unexpected technical challenges with interference and bandwidth increased technology costs for a total of \$35,000.
- HHC decreased the in-person pilot to \$1,000 due to increased costs in other areas.