

# Arizona



## National CLAS Standards Planning, Policies, and Collaboration

The Arizona Department of Health Services has incorporated the National CLAS Standards in several of its policies and procedures. The department's Bureau of Health Systems Development developed a 2013 [Arizona Health Equity Stakeholder Strategies](#)<sup>1</sup> plan that outlines strategies for improving cultural and linguistic competency and the diversity of the health-related workforce based on the National CLAS Standards. In addition, the Division of Behavioral Health Services' annual [Cultural Competency Work Plans](#)<sup>2</sup> outline objectives and action steps to implement elements of the National CLAS Standards. The specific objectives include education and training on the National CLAS Standards; collaboration with community-based organizations to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness; implementation and analysis of organizational self-assessment; communication, marketing, and outreach to increase knowledge of services available to diverse populations; data collection and reporting to improve the number of culturally appropriate strategies and initiatives; and the development of policies, procedures, and regulations.

The Division of Behavioral Health Services also outlines policies regarding cultural competency and the National CLAS Standards in its [2014 Policy and Procedures Manual](#)<sup>3</sup> (Section 1; Chapter 400; Policy 407). The division requires that entities providing services in Arizona's public health system adhere to all of the National CLAS Standards. This includes providing language access (i.e., assistance) services, culturally competent care, and organizational support for cultural and linguistic needs. These standards and objectives are reiterated in Section 3.23 of the division's [Provider Manual](#).<sup>4</sup>

In 2012, the Arizona Department of Health Services partnered with the Arizona Association of Community Health Centers, the Asian Pacific Community in Action,

and Health Through Action Arizona to conduct a Web-based survey of community health centers in Arizona. The goal of the survey was to determine opportunities for, and barriers to, language access services by assessing the language access knowledge, opinions, and needs of health care professionals. The survey measured elements such as the number of respondents who have received employer-sponsored training on the National CLAS Standards, the availability of interpretative services, and the types of translated written or printed materials available to populations with limited English proficiency. A [report](#)<sup>5</sup> of the findings is available on the Arizona Health Disparities Center website.

## National CLAS Standards Training and Technical Assistance

The Arizona Health Disparities Center of the Arizona Department of Health Services launched a National CLAS Standards online training in 2014 in partnership with the department's Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity. The purpose of the training is to bring awareness of the National CLAS Standards to people in health care settings. The 1-hour training includes five online modules with pre- and post-tests, leading to a certificate of completion. The Arizona Health Disparities Center has partnered with the Northern Area Health Education Center to provide continuing education credits for participants. More information about the online training and technical assistance can be found on the Arizona Health Disparities Center's [CLAS Standards](#)<sup>6</sup> webpage.

In addition to National CLAS Standards training, the Division of Behavioral Health Services developed an [Organizational Self-Assessment of Cultural Competency Activities](#)<sup>7</sup> survey. The tool helps an organization in evaluating how it functions in key areas of cultural competency. The goal of the assessment is to provide information that can be used to produce continuous service and management improve-

ments as well as to identify opportunities for education and training. It focuses on ten categories of activities that support and promote cultural competency and responsiveness. One of the categories, Standards and Contractual Requirements, specifically addresses “cultural competence and Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) and other reporting requirements” for an organization’s subcontractors.

## National CLAS Standards Dissemination

The Arizona Health Disparities Center created [Implementing CLAS Standards and Improving Cultural Competency and Language Access: A Practical Toolkit](#).<sup>8</sup> The purpose of the toolkit is to provide a practical guide and resources for organizations and agencies seeking to implement the National CLAS Standards. The toolkit provides an overview of the National CLAS Standards that includes the federal Office of Minority Health definition, a synopsis of the National CLAS Standards history and 2013 enhancements, and a full list of the 15 National CLAS Standards. An “Implementing CLAS Standards” section provides a list of tips for implementing the National CLAS Standards as well as the organizational benefits of doing so. A section of the toolkit that is dedicated to cultural competency and its relevance to CLAS provides links to cultural competency tools and resources such as self-assessment and

implementation guides. A similar section that is dedicated to language access provides links to resources developed by the Arizona Health Disparities Center’s Language Access Initiative such as *I Speak* Cards, factsheets, and assessment guides. The final section of the toolkit provides links to tools and resources specific to each National CLAS Standard.

The Arizona Health Disparities Center also has established a [National CLAS Standards](#)<sup>6</sup> webpage to disseminate the National CLAS Standards and promote their implementation. The webpage provides a brief introduction to the National CLAS Standards and links to the federal Think Cultural Health website. The webpage also lists CLAS resources offered by the Arizona Department of Health Services, including links to the *Implementing CLAS Standards and Improving Cultural Competency and Language Access: A Practical Toolkit*, a flyer and registration form for the National CLAS Standards Online Training, and contact information for CLAS training and technical assistance. The Arizona Health Disparities Center also promotes the National CLAS Standards through articles in the [AHDConnection](#)<sup>9</sup> newsletter and email network [weekly updates](#),<sup>10</sup> both of which can be found on the center’s website.

## Endnotes

- 1 Arizona Department of Health Services, Health Disparities Center. (2013, January). *Arizona Health Equity Stakeholder Strategies*. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from Arizona Department of Health Services: <http://azdhs.gov/documents/director/public-information-office/news-releases/2013/130108-final-health-equity-plan.pdf>.
- 2 Arizona Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health Services. (n.d.). *Cultural Competence*. Retrieved November 6, 2014, from Arizona Department of Health Services: <http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/cultural>.
- 3 Arizona Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health Services. (2014, July 15). *Policy and Procedures Manual*. Retrieved November 6, 2014, from Arizona Department of Health Services: <http://azdhs.gov/bhs/policy/documents/policies/bhs-policy-407.pdf>.
- 4 Arizona Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health Services. (2011, February 1). *Provider Manual*. Retrieved November 6, 2014, from Arizona Department of Health Services: [http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/provider/sec3\\_23.pdf](http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/provider/sec3_23.pdf).
- 5 Arizona Department of Health Services, Health Disparities Center. (2012, October). *Language-Access Assessment among the Community Health Centers in Arizona*. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from Asian Pacific Community in Action: <http://www.apcaaz.org/resources/Language-Access-Assessment.pdf>.
- 6 Arizona Department of Health Services, Health Disparities Center. (n.d.). *CLAS Standards*. Retrieved November 6, 2014, from Arizona Department of Health Services: <http://www.azdhs.gov/hsd/health-disparities/clas-standards.htm>.
- 7 Arizona Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health Services. (n.d.). *Organizational Self Assessment of Cultural Competency*. Retrieved November 6, 2014, from Arizona Department of Health Services: <http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/cultural/assess.htm>.
- 8 Arizona Department of Health Services, Health Disparities Center. (n.d.). *Implementing CLAS Standards and Improving Cultural Competency and Language Access: A Practical Toolkit*. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from Immigration Research and Information: [http://www.immigrationresearch-info.org/system/files/implementing\\_CLAS\\_standards.pdf](http://www.immigrationresearch-info.org/system/files/implementing_CLAS_standards.pdf).
- 9 Arizona Department of Health Services, Health Disparities Center. (n.d.). *AHDConnection Newsletter*. Retrieved November 6, 2014, from Arizona Department of Health Services: <http://www.azdhs.gov/hsd/health-disparities/newsletter.htm>.
- 10 Arizona Department of Health Services. (n.d.). *Health Disparities Center*. Retrieved March 5, 2015, from <http://azdhs.gov/hsd/health-disparities/index.htm>.