

California



National CLAS Standards Planning, Policies, and Collaboration

The California Department of Public Health has incorporated the National CLAS Standards in state policies and procedures. In 2014, the Department's Office of Health Equity drafted [California's Statewide Plan to Promote Health and Mental Health Equity](#),¹ which outlined priorities and goals targeted for implementation through 2019. Widespread adoption of the National CLAS Standards is identified as a goal under "Strategic Priority C: Embed Equity into Institutional Policies and Practices across the Health Field." Initially, the Office of Health Equity strived to support the adoption of the National CLAS Standards through widespread assessment, technical assistance, and training.

The California Department of Public Health's 2014 [California Wellness Plan](#)² identifies the increase of culturally and linguistically appropriate services as a key strategy in achieving the goal of equity in health and well-being. The objectives outlined in the plan include incorporating the National CLAS Standards in chronic disease prevention programs, processes, and publications (by 2018); increasing the percentage of persons who report that their health care provider always listens carefully and explains things so they can understand them (by 2020); and creating a statewide training and certification program for patient navigators (by 2020).

The Department of Health Care Services mandates that each county's mental health department develop and annually update a [Cultural Competence Plan](#)³ to facilitate cultural competency at the county level, in accordance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 9 §1810.410 (9 CCR §1810.410). The goal of a Cultural Competence Plan is to ensure the reduction of mental health service disparities identified in racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and other underserved populations and the development of the most

culturally and linguistically competent programs and services, to meet the needs of California's diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural communities in the mental health system of care. Cultural Competence Plan requirements (criteria 4–8) are based on the National CLAS Standards, with a focus on staff receiving ongoing education and training in culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery. The criteria have been recently revised and incorporate the 2013 enhanced National CLAS Standards. They include the development of a Cultural Competence Committee; mandatory annual cultural competency training for staff; the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a multicultural workforce; the availability of language services; and assurance that clients/consumers receive effective, understandable, and respectful care, provided in a manner compatible with their cultural health beliefs and practices and preferred language. Aside from culturally competent mental health service delivery, the mental health departments must demonstrate and outline effective outreach activities to unserved and previously underserved communities.

In the 2010–2012 Cultural Competency Quality Improvement Strategic Plan,⁴ the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs adopted a series of cultural competency goals and strategies. (The department's programs were transferred to the California Department of Health Care Services in 2013). The three overarching goals were to ensure that all business functions of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs supported culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery; ensure that all of the department's business functions support linguistic competency in service delivery; and ensure that the department institutionalizes goals, policies, operational plans, and management accountability. Each goal is supported by a list of strategies that are based on the National CLAS Standards. In the 2011–2012 County Monitoring Annual Report,⁵ the department assessed to what extent each Standard had

been implemented by counties and service providers. The report found that providing language assistance services was the most successfully implemented Standard, and the most common barrier to implementing the National CLAS Standards was a lack of qualified bilingual staff.

Some divisions of the California Department of Public Health have established committees to help advance cultural competency and implementation of the National CLAS Standards. The [Advisory Committee](#)⁶ of the Office of Health Equity is integral in advancing the goals of the office and advises on the development and implementation of the office's strategic plan and the National CLAS Standards.^{7,8} The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission's [Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee](#)⁹ organizes and participates in activities to assess cultural and linguistic competency. This includes conducting an organizational self-assessment based on guidance from the National CLAS Standards, developing recommendations, and presenting findings to the Commission.

National CLAS Standards Dissemination

In 2011, the California Department of Public Health's Office of Multicultural Health created the "Providing Quality Health Care with CLAS Curriculum Tool Kit." (The Office of Multicultural Health became part of the newly established

Office of Health Equity in 2012.) The toolkit includes both a [Participant Workbook](#)¹⁰ and [Facilitator's Manual](#).¹¹ The toolkit program is designed to help organization leaders and program managers implement the National CLAS Standards by building upon existing infrastructure and mission values. It utilizes small-group, problem-based discussions to enhance creative problem-solving and develop higher-level understanding of CLAS topics.

The toolkit program has three parts. The first part involves an anonymous survey to assess participants' familiarity and comfort with the National CLAS Standards. In the second part of the program, participants attend four workshop sessions, each lasting 4 hours, in order to develop a quality improvement plan that incorporates one or more of the National CLAS Standards. After each session, participants are given assignments to complete before the next session. The third part of the program involves attending six monthly 1-hour follow-up sessions that help participants implement and maintain the CLAS quality improvement plan.

Endnotes

- 1 California Department of Public Health. (n.d.). *California Statewide Plan to Promote Health and Mental Health Equity*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/OHEStatewidePlan.aspx>.
- 2 California Department of Public Health. (2014). *California Wellness Plan*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cdcb/Documents/CDPH-CAWellnessPlan2014%20%28Agency%20Approved%29.FINAL.2-27-14%28Protected%29.pdf>.
- 3 California Department of Mental Health, Office of Multicultural Services. (n.d.). *Cultural Competence Plan Requirements*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Health Care Services: <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Documents/CCPR10-17Enclosure1.pdf>.
- 4 California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. (2010, November). *Cultural Competency Quality Improvement Strategic Plan 2010–2012*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs: http://cojac.ca.gov/pdf/CCQI_Strategic_Plan_2010-12.pdf.
- 5 California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. (n.d.). *County Monitoring Annual Report 2011–2012*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Alcohol and Drug Problems: <http://cojac.ca.gov/library/pdf/FY11-12-Annual-Report.pdf>.
- 6 California Department of Public Health. (n.d.). *Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/OHEAdvisoryCommitteeHomePage.aspx>.
- 7 California Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity. (2014, January 6-7). *Strategic Planning Meeting Summary*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Public Health: http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Documents/Meeting_Summary_January2014.pdf.
- 8 California Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity. (2014, May 12). *Meeting of the Office of Health Equity (OHE) Advisory Committee*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Documents/OHE%20AC%20May%202014.pdf>.
- 9 Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. (2014). *Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee 2014 Charter*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission: http://www.mhsoac.ca.gov/Committees/docs/Charters/2014/CLCC_2014_%20Charter.pdf.
- 10 California Department of Public Health, Office of Multicultural Health. (2011). *A Curriculum for Developing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services: Participant Workbook*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/SiteCollectionDocuments/Participant%20Workbook%20for%20Providing%20Quality%20Health%20Care%20with%20CLAS.pdf>.
- 11 California Department of Public Health, Office of Multicultural Health. (2011). *A Curriculum for Developing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services: Facilitator's Manual*. Retrieved December 8, 2014, from California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/SiteCollectionDocuments/CLAS%20Facilitator%20for%20web.pdf>.