

# Connecticut



## National CLAS Standards Planning, Policies, and Collaboration

In 2008, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) established the [Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership](#).<sup>1</sup> The partnership is a coalition of public and private partners working to develop and implement an action plan to identify and address health disparities and multicultural health issues through the collaboration of a diverse multidisciplinary group. The foundation of the Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership's [Strategic Plan 2009–2010](#)<sup>2</sup> is implementation of the National CLAS Standards in Connecticut. It outlines goals, objectives, and activities for implementing each Standard, and provides information on how outcomes will be measured and about the committee appointed to implement the goals.

Adoption and implementation of the National CLAS Standards also are identified in [Healthy Connecticut 2020](#),<sup>3</sup> the state's translation of the national Healthy People 2020 initiative. It provides a framework for health promotion and disease prevention, with overarching themes of health equity and social determinants of health. The [Healthy Connecticut 2020 State Health Improvement Plan](#)<sup>4</sup> was created through a statewide collaborative planning process that engaged partners and organizations to develop, support, and implement the plan. Health equity is a central tenet of the plan, which was developed with a focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. Implementation of the National CLAS Standards was identified as a key objective for facilitating access to relevant health information by providers and patients, and for enhancing informed decision-making among those involved in patient care. The plan lists strategies for achieving this objective, such as establishing training and quality control/testing standards for health and social service providers, researching and evaluating effective health literacy and the needs of the population, and exploring licensing for medical interpreters. The [Healthy Connecticut 2020 Perfor-](#)

[mance Dashboard](#)<sup>5</sup> identifies three performance measures related to National CLAS Standards implementation.

In October 2014, the DPH Office of Health Equity completed a baseline assessment and report on the National CLAS Standards entitled [Connecticut Department of Public Health National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care \(CLAS Standards\) Baseline Assessment](#).<sup>6</sup> This baseline assessment, which was conducted over a 12-month period, identifies eight distinct recommendations regarding implementation of the enhanced National CLAS Standards.

## National CLAS Standards Training and Technical Assistance

In 2009, the Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership released a [Report on Cultural Competency Training for Health Care Professionals in Connecticut](#).<sup>7</sup> In order to capture what government and nonprofit agencies were doing to train their staff in cultural competency, the Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership's Education and Training Committee conducted an extensive Internet-based search on cultural and linguistic training programs available in the state, as well as a series of focus groups with health and social service representatives. In addition to presenting the findings of these activities, the report provides a list of training recommendations for the state. The primary training recommendations are to disseminate a basic training in the National CLAS Standards across the state in multiple health and social service environments and to promote the use of continuous organizational self-assessment of CLAS-related activities. Objectives for achieving these goals include implementing a train-the-trainer model in the National CLAS Standards for a statewide group of trainers, selected competitively and in exchange for providing a specific number of trainings at sites chosen by the Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership; having trainers implement a basic training in the National

CLAS Standards across the state and in multiple health and social service environments, reaching 100 professionals annually; and providing CLAS assessment tools on the virtual community network. To help users implement CLAS training and assessments, the report provides an extensive list of publicly available resources from federal and state organizations, such as CLAS organizational assessment tools and training opportunities.

In 2013, the Connecticut Department of Public Health appointed a CLAS Standards Coordinator, who is responsible for National CLAS Standards training of, and technical assistance to, DPH staff and contractors. The CLAS Standards Coordinator has developed an introductory training for staff and contractors entitled [CLAS 101](#).<sup>8</sup> Additional National CLAS Standards training resources are available via the public health training website [TRAIN-CT](#).<sup>9</sup>

### National CLAS Standards Dissemination

The [Faces of Disparity Awareness Campaign](#)<sup>10</sup> was created by the Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership's Communication and Media Committee. It consists of two complementary media productions: The Faces of Disparity Exhibit, and the Faces of Disparity Video. The Faces of Disparity Exhibit is a portable display of nine freestanding panels that portray health disparities by means of personal stories. Each

story is followed by relevant public health data and by a CLAS Standard that, if implemented, would improve health care and health outcomes. The [Faces of Disparity Video](#)<sup>11</sup> is a 15-minute documentary that integrates personal stories of health care consumers with the perspectives of leading experts in health care and public health. The video defines health disparities, identifies contributing factors, and presents the National CLAS Standards as resources for change.

The Department of Public Health's Office of Health Equity also provides information on the National CLAS Standards on its [home page](#).<sup>12</sup> The Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership [website](#) also provides resources on the National CLAS Standards, including a link to the federal Office of Minority Health website; a [CLAS brochure](#);<sup>13</sup> lists of the National CLAS Standards translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Mandarin, and Korean; and links to CLAS assessment tools and training opportunities developed by national organizations. The Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership also developed and distributed [An Analysis of the 2013 National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services \(CLAS\) in Health and Health Care](#).<sup>14</sup> The document discusses the history of the National CLAS Standards and includes a detailed analysis of the differences between the original National CLAS Standards and the 2013 enhanced National CLAS Standards.

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### Endnotes

- 1 Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership. (n.d.). *Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership Homepage*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from <http://www.ctmhp.org>.
- 2 Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership. (2009). *The Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership Strategic Plan 2009–2010*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership: [http://www.ctmhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/CMHP\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_100209.pdf](http://www.ctmhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/CMHP_Strategic_Plan_100209.pdf).
- 3 Connecticut Department of Public Health. (n.d.). *Health Connecticut 2020*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Department of Public Health: <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3130&q=542346>.
- 4 Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2014, March). *Healthy Connecticut 2020 State Health Improvement Plan*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Department of Public Health: [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/state\\_health\\_planning/sha-ship/hct2020/hct2020\\_state\\_hlth\\_impv\\_032514.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/state_health_planning/sha-ship/hct2020/hct2020_state_hlth_impv_032514.pdf).
- 5 Connecticut Department of Public Health. (n.d.). *Healthy Connecticut 2020 Performance Dashboard*. Retrieved February 23, 2015, from Connecticut Department of Public Health <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3130&q=553676>.
- 6 Connecticut Department of Public Health. (n.d.). *Office of Health Equity*. Retrieved February 23, 2015, from Connecticut Department of Public Health: [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hems/health\\_equity/dph\\_baseline\\_narrative\\_final\\_20141126.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hems/health_equity/dph_baseline_narrative_final_20141126.pdf).
- 7 Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership. (n.d.). *A Report on Cultural Competency Training for Health Care Professionals in Connecticut*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Department of Public Health: [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/multicultural\\_health/cmph\\_training.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/multicultural_health/cmph_training.pdf).
- 8 Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2015, January). *CLAS Standards 101*. Retrieved February 25, 2015, from Connecticut Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity: [http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hems/health\\_equity/clas\\_101\\_web-based\\_basic\\_20150130.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hems/health_equity/clas_101_web-based_basic_20150130.pdf).
- 9 Connecticut Department of Public Health. (n.d.) *TRAINConnecticut*. Retrieved February 24, 2015: <https://ct.train.org>.
- 10 Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership. (n.d.). *Faces of Disparity Awareness Campaign*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership: <http://www.ctmhp.org/our-committees/committee-name-3>.

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- 11 Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership. (n.d.). *Faces of Disparity Video*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership: <http://www.ctmhp.org/press/faces-of-disparity-video>.
- 12 Connecticut Department of Public Health. (n.d.). Office of Health Equity. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Department of Public Health: <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3137&cpm=1&Q=552788>.
- 13 Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership. (n.d.). *CLAS Brochure*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership: [http://www.ctmhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/CLAS\\_Brochure\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ctmhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/CLAS_Brochure_Web.pdf).
- 14 Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership. (2013). *An Analysis of the 2013 National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care*. Retrieved December 23, 2014, from Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership: <http://www.ctmhp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CMHP-CLAS-Standards-Analysis.pdf>.