

I am contacting you regarding a key health equity issue for newcomers and Indigenous peoples; access to professional healthcare interpretation. Interpretation services are a crucial tool for healthcare providers to meet standard of care. When a professional interpreter is not present, family members, friends and untrained staff are called upon to fill this void leading to medical errors, parentification of children and a lack of adherence to treatment plans.

Health Standards Organization has included provision of professional interpretation within their accreditation standards. Healthcare organizations and individual practitioners are supportive of using interpreters, however struggle with the logistics to locate and finance these services.

I endorse the principles of National Newcomer Navigation Network's position paper [Pan-Canadian Standards for Healthcare Equity: The Case for Provincial Interpretation Services](#) which calls on provincial governments to fund a centralized provincially funded interpretation for all publicly funded healthcare. Such a system is already in place in Manitoba and has been shown to improve provider and patient satisfaction, decreased healthcare usage, and patient safety.

We urge the Ministry of Health to prioritize the establishment (or expansion) of a centralized provincially funded interpretation service to ensure equitable healthcare access for all provincial residents at all points of care. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,