Language Access Work Group

TABLE ONE – Draft Options for State of Washington Medical Interpreter Testing and Certification

INTERPRETER OPTIONS[1]		Pre-Testing Components			Testing	Certification	Post-Certification Components			
		Pre-Test Screening	Test Prep Training	Interpreter Skills Training			Continuing Ed (CE) Course Approval	CE Training	CE Credit Tracking	Revocation
1	**Community College – Career Pathway (medical)** Community colleges would manage all processes including screening, training, testing, certifying, and post-certification components for medical interpreters.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	**DES Contracts with National Medical Interpreter Certifying Bodies (medical)** DES facilitates statewide contracts using fee-for-service. The contracted testing & certifying bodies would independently provide all elements of medical interpreter certification, from screening through post-certification.	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
3	**DSHS Continues Third-Party Testing with Additional Funding (medical)** DSHS would continue to certify medical interpreters with third-party testing scores and manage the post-certification components of CE course approval, CE tracking, and certification revocation. — **DSHS**	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Third-Party Testing Entities	Yes	No	Optional (depending on entities)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
4	**State Centralized Office Partners with National Medical Interpreter Certifying Bodies (medical)** A brand-new, state-centralized office would be created to certify medical interpreters with test scores from national testing bodies and manage post-certification processes. — **State Centralized Office**	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	National Med. Int. Certifying Bodies	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
5	**State Centralized Office Partners with Community Colleges (medical + option to include others)** A brand-new, state-centralized office would partner with community colleges. Together, they would provide all elements of certification for medical interpreters with the option to include all other types of language access providers in the state such as court, social services, quasi-legal, written document translators, etc. The option to include others recognizes that SSB 5304 limited the work group to provide recommendations on medical interpreters. — **State Centralized Office**	Yes (shared)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Community Colleges	Yes (shared)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No

For detailed descriptions of each element that may be provided by the options, please see TABLE TWO below.

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[1] Some of the options are a vision for the future. They may require further research or modification of state statutes to be implemented.

TABLE TWO – Draft Description of Core Components of Medical Interpreter Testing and Certification

Pre-Testing Components			Testing	Certification	Post-Certification Components			
Pre-Test Screening	Test Prep Training	Interpreter Skills Training			Continuing Education (CE) Course Approval	CE Training	CE Credit Tracking	Revocation
Documentation that demonstrates oral and written proficiency in English and the non-English language as a prerequisite for taking the written tests.	Train candidates to prepare for the tests.	Train candidates on interpreter knowledge and skills to prepare them for the medical interpreting profession.	Test candidates' knowledge and skills to ensure they meet the requirements of a competent, qualified interpreter	Interpreter candidates must pass all obligatory tests, orientations, and other requirements, as applicable, to be eligible to request a credential.	Review and approve CE courses submitted by training entities or individuals.	Provide CE courses or other related professional development activities that help interpreters stay up to date with required knowledge and skills.	Review and approve CE credits submitted by certified interpreters.	Respond to complaints that interpreters are not in compliance with standards of professional and ethical codes of conduct.

• Age
• General education background
• Experience
• Non-English language proficiency
• TOEFL / ACTFL / other well-designed English language proficiency tests
• Cultural knowledge
• Medical interpretation training
• Evidence/documentation of eligibility requirements
	• Test prep courses	• Courses to teach knowledge and skills related to interpreting in healthcare settings	• Test candidates on what they have been trained on
			• Tests meet federal standards and requirements for reliability and validity
				• Orientation trainings
				  ○ Professional code of ethics
				  ○ Knowledge about work domain (e.g., site/situation/ environment specific)
				• Practicum (optional)
					• Well-defined approval criteria
					• Regular review schedule
					• Review committee
						• Courses can be in various modes (in-person or remote) and in various formats (e.g., webinars and workshops)
						• Content can focus on ethics or general knowledge and skills for interpreters
							• Track CE credits
							• Code of conduct acknowledgement
							• Background check, if needed
							• Maintain updated roster of active interpreters
								• Review revocation requests
								• Investigate allegations
								• Decide on a resolution (e.g., dismiss, warn, suspend, or revoke)
								• Enforce a decision
								• Manage the legal hearing in cases of appeal
								• Manage other disciplinary processes
								• Quality assurance/ monitoring

NOTE: The Work Group Would Like to Recommend These Other Factors Be Considered

- Raise indigenous languages and languages of lesser diffusion to be on par with other languages
- Outreach – Target outreach to recruit needed languages
- Navigation – Help people interested in interpreting to navigate pre-test training, testing, certification, and post-certification
- Peer Learning Connections – Connect interpreters going through the same journey together
- Partnerships – Coordinate with communities of high need languages to target people to enter training programs
- Request a review of English-only as the standard language for interpreters
- Scholarships/funding
- Testing availability – follow trends in immigration
- Testing/proctoring software
- Reporting of testing scores
- Accessibility
  - Languages of lesser diffusion
  - Sign language
  - Neurodiverse
- Examine other ways for the state to consistently support interpreters for court, quasi-legal, educational settings, etc.