

**TO:** Local District Commissioners, Medicaid Directors

**FROM:** Judith Arnold, Division of Coverage and Enrollment

**SUBJECT:** Language Identification Tool for Assisting Persons with Limited English Proficiency

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

**CONTACT PERSON:** Local District Support Unit  
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The purpose of this General Information System (GIS) message is to inform local departments of social services (LDSS) that the New York State Department of Health (DOH), the Office of Children and Family Services and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance have developed a new Language Identification Tool.

The Language Identification Tool assists people who do not speak or read English proficiently to identify their primary language when seeking access to LDSS' programs, including Medicaid. The attached Language Identification Tool, available as both a poster and desk aid, informs Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals of their right to free language assistance and assists LDSS staff in the identification of the language spoken when helping an LEP person face-to-face. LEP persons are individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. These tools, a 17" x 22" poster and an 8½" x 14" desk aid, are available for distribution and can be ordered from the DOH warehouse. Requests for the posters and desk aids, OCFS Pub.5103/OTDA Pub.4842 (2010), can be faxed to (518) 465-0432.

Federal requirements, which derive from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations, require meaningful access to services and benefits for LEP individuals. GIS 99 MA/021, "Access to Services" previously reminded LDSS that LEP persons must have access to social services programs, and districts must make arrangements to provide interpretation and translation services for LEP persons. It is recommended that you post the Language Identification Tool (17" x 22" poster) in a visible location where an LEP person may seek assistance. The desk aid should be distributed to LDSS Medicaid staff that either work with or have the potential of assisting LEP persons.