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How to Find a Doctor Who Speaks Spanish

ESPAÑOL

Don't let a language barrier get between you and good health care

When it comes to your health, it's critical to be able to communicate clearly with your doctor. Speaking the same language certainly helps.

But for some Hispanics living in the United States who may prefer to communicate in Spanish with their doctors, finding a Spanish-speaking physician can be a challenge.

However, there are bilingual and Spanish-speaking physicians available — if you know how to find them. Here are some tips:

Getting started finding a Spanish-speaking doctor

Ask family and friends. This is usually your best resource because you can get firsthand, personal information from someone you trust.

Contact community organizations. Check with nonprofits or faith communities that work in partnership with hospitals to bring health services to a church or community center.

Consult with your health plan provider. If you are covered by private health insurance, some companies can help direct you to Spanish-speaking doctors in network.

Turn to the Internet. You can look online for other organizations, insurance providers or health care specialties with websites that include a search function that allows you to enter your language preference when searching for a physician.

Checking out resources

Some national organizations have local affiliates that can help you find a Spanish-speaking physician in your area:

The American Medical Association (AMA) offers a directory of doctors across the U.S. Here you can locate physicians serving your geographic area and see if they or allied health professionals in their offices speak Spanish.

The [National Alliance for Hispanic Health](#) is a network of health and human service providers for Hispanic consumers throughout the U.S. You can access this organization's resources on their website or by calling Su Familia: The National Hispanic Family Health Helpline toll-free at 866-783-2645, supported by bilingual information specialists.

Arranging for a Spanish language interpreter

While not as optimal as a Spanish-speaking physician, inquire with the receptionist at your medical practice whether someone on staff knows Spanish and is willing to help with communication. It's best to ask for interpreters or translators who are both bilingual and bicultural so they are able to handle subtleties of the language.

The federal government has recognized the increasing need for more Spanish-speaking medical professionals and now requires physicians who accept Medicaid and Medicare payments to pay for interpreters for patients with limited English. Some doctors are learning Spanish and becoming bilingual with the goal of providing the best possible care to all patients.

Making an appointment

Once you've found a doctor or group practice, call to make an appointment and tell the scheduling nurse you want a Spanish-speaking physician. See if the office will allow time prior to or during the initial visit for you to [get to know the doctor and establish a rapport](#).

If you are the caregiver, ask if it's possible to talk with the physician ahead of time about the patient's background and health condition. You may want to inform the doctor about the patient's language preference, religious affiliation, diet and exercise routine, specifics of the medical condition, other medical professionals recently visited for the condition, medications prescribed, and who in the family has authority to make health care decisions.

With this information in hand, the physician will be better prepared to talk with and treat your loved one in a culturally respectful manner that can positively affect your loved one's behavior and potentially improve health care outcomes.

AARP was founded in 1958 and has over 38 million members. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization for people over the age of 50. AARP is well-known for its advocacy efforts, providing its members with important information, products and services that enhance quality of life as they age. They also promote community service and keep members and the public informed on issues relating to the over 50 age group.

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