

A video medical interpretation & health navigation partnership for Burmese refugees



Dates of Program

2010- 2013

Field of Work

Medical interpretation and healthcare navigation services provided through video and telephone to limited English-speaking Burmese individuals.

Problem Synopsis

Many limited-English speaking Burmese individuals and the healthcare providers who served them did not have access to trained interpreters. Use of non-trained individuals as interpreters led to serious medical complications and even death. A model was needed to provide trained interpreters in an affordable and on-demand manner to enable medical providers to serve this population. The identified objectives were to improve limited-English speaking Burmese individual's access to and understanding of their healthcare needs and to prevent/minimize the potential public health threat presented by some of their contagious conditions.

Synopsis of Work

The Foundation established a legal partnership with Advantage Health Solutions and Parkview Hospital to create a shared English – Burmese medical interpretation/ healthcare navigation service. The program, Project Connect, provided virtual services from a central office through a HIPAA secure video software program and the telephone to eight community partnering organizations. The trained virtual interpreters were available Monday through Friday from 9AM to 5PM serving as virtual extensions to the medical office staffs. On a typical day, they would provide medical interpretation via “Vsee” video software into a medical office or the hospital emergency room. When not interpreting in an appointment, they worked directly with the medical provider's clients setting up follow up appointments, communicating provider instructions, and assisting them in accessing other health-related services such as transportation and insurance benefits. The trained medical interpreters/ health navigators could assist as many as 30-40 clients per day. The program was disbanded when it was determined that a majority of the clients had improved English language and health navigation skills and were no longer in need of the Project Connect services.

Primary Partners

- St. Joseph Community Health Foundation (Sponsor and Program Management)
- Advantage Health Solutions (Sponsor and Navigation Training)
- Parkview Hospital (Sponsor and Provider Partner)
- IN Department of Family & Social Services Administration (Refugee Preventative Health Funding)
- Provider Partners (Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health, Neighborhood Health Clinics, Aids Task Force dba Positive Resource Center, Heartland Hospice, Family Medicine Practice, Healthier Moms & Babies, and Matthew 25 Health & Dental Clinic)

Key Results

- 3,202 clients served
- 29,000+ individual services provided
- Recognized for innovative use of technology by The Indiana Perinatal Network and The Association of Clinicians for the Underserved