

Many U.S. hospitals offer language services

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(HealthDay)—Overall, 68.8 percent of hospitals offer language services, with the proportion increasing with level of need, according to research published in the August issue of *Health Affairs*.

Melody K. Schiaffino, Ph.D., M.P.H., from San Diego State University, and colleagues used two major data sets to compare [hospital](#) characteristics, availability of language services, and the need for them across 4,514 general U.S. hospitals.

The researchers found that, nationwide, 68.8 percent of hospitals offered language services; the proportion increased with level of need, from 65.4 to 74.7 percent in low-need and high-need areas, respectively. Areas of low need were widely distributed across the United States, with no definitive geographic pattern; there was also no definitive geographic pattern for whether hospitals offered language services. There were multiple areas of moderate and high need without hospital language services. Of the hospitals that offered language services, the largest proportion were private and not-for-profit.

"Further study is necessary to develop models that predict which low-need areas will remain so, and which will become moderate- or high-need areas over time. We can see that diversity in the United States includes not only race and ethnicity but also language, culture, and geography," the authors write. "Hospitals need to take this context into account if they are to deliver care that is consistent with the changing needs of their communities."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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