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**To: Preventive Agency Executive Directors and Program Directors:**

**From: Charles Barrios**

**Date: March 9, 2012**

**Re: Interpreter Services**

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In our ongoing effort to assist provider agencies in serving New York City's diverse immigrant population, ACS will continue to provide access to in-person and telephonic interpretation services for both in-home and office meetings to all preventive service agencies, in over 180 languages. Although utilizing interpreters is not the ideal way of delivering services to families, we recognize the importance of putting mechanisms in place so that families are not left waiting for preventive services due to language barriers. We encourage providers to make use of interpreter services, and to remain available for the referral of non-English speaking families.

ACS requests that provider agencies explore and make efficient use of alternative and existing resources before requesting interpreter services. For example, provider agencies are expected to serve Spanish speaking families with existing bilingual staff and other internal resources. The use of interpreters for Spanish speaking clients should be limited to special circumstances, such as the occurrence of a family crisis while a bilingual case planner is temporarily unavailable. ACS anticipates that the vast majority of interpreter services requests will be for serving immigrant families where no bilingual/bicultural staff capacity exists.

Our goal is to make access to interpretation services as easy as possible, while ensuring appropriate accountability for the use of interpreters. To that end, we have modified the process for securing interpretation services. Effective 4/01/12, all provider agencies will be required to identify an interpretation services liaison and complete vouchers for all interpretation requests.

Procedure for accessing on-site interpreting services:

**Necessary Steps to Access On-Site In-Person Interpreter**

1. Provider agencies needing an in-person interpreter must identify an Interpretation Services Liaison by April 1<sup>st</sup>, and email the name, address and telephone number of the Liaison to the Office of Preventive Technical Assistance (OPTA) at: [PrevTa@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:PrevTa@dfa.state.ny.us).
2. The Interpretation Services Liaison or a designated agency employee must pick up vouchers from the Office of Preventive Technical Assistance no later than April 30<sup>th</sup> for all services to be rendered after May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 (**REQUESTS WILL NOT BE HONORED IF THERE IS NO LIAISON AND VOUCHERS HAVE NOT BEEN DISTRIBUTED**)

3. Provider agencies needing an in-person interpreter should send: an interpretation request form (see attached) via e-mail to the Office of Preventive Technical Assistance mailbox: [PrevTa@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:PrevTa@dfa.state.ny.us). If the request is for Spanish interpretation, a justification must be included. The case planner's supervisor must also be copied on the e-mail request. Requests for in-person interpreters should be made at least 24 hours before the interpreter is needed to ensure access.
4. The case planner must also complete the ACS Interpretation Services Voucher; form CS1250 (see attached) for all interpretation requests. This form must be submitted to the OPTA on the 15<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. THE FORM CANNOT BE FAXED, MAILED, OR SCANNED.  
**Note: Interpretation requests will not be honored if vouchers are not received.**
5. The preventive technical assistance staff will e-mail the vendor with the request along with our approval. The approval will also be forwarded to the case planner who requested the interpreter.
6. If the meeting is cancelled, OPTA must be contacted by the case planner at least 4 business hours before the appointment, as ACS will have to pay for the service if insufficient notice is provided to the vendor.
7. At the completion of the session, the interpreter will provide a timesheet that needs to be signed by the preventive case planner, verifying that the interpreter service was provided. The case planner should retain a copy of the signed timesheet. The case planner should also ensure that the ACS Interpretation Services Voucher, form CS1250, is signed by the interpreter. This form must be submitted to the OPTA either on the 15<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. Provider agencies should keep a copy of the form. THE FORM CANNOT BE FAXED, MAILED, OR SCANNED.
8. The telephonic interpreter system should be used to set up meetings for non-English speaking clients; for discussions that are expected to last less than 30 minutes and for emergencies. For longer meetings, in-person interpreters should be utilized. Consequently, we expect that preventive agencies that are utilizing the in-person interpreters will also access the telephonic interpreting system. Note: Providers are required to submit monthly logs verifying use of telephonic interpretation services (see attached). Agencies that do not submit these logs may not be able to access the telephonic interpretation service.

While using interpreters may be necessary to serve some non-English speaking families, we continue to encourage you to create bilingual/bicultural capacity within

your programs as the needs of families and the communities within which they reside dictate. For questions about accessing interpreter services, please contact the OPTA mailbox at: [PrevTa@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:PrevTa@dfa.state.ny.us), or call the OPTA helpline at 212-676-7667. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Charles Barrios

