



# Doctors Priority Line

## 1300 131 450

A free phone interpreting service for medical practitioners in private practice, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.



**Do any of your patients need, or prefer to speak languages other than English?**

**Have you ever needed an interpreter but didn't know where to find one?**

**The Doctors Priority Line can help you.**

### Hints for using a phone interpreter

Consider your type of phone:

- A standard phone is ideal for emergencies or occasional use. Regular users should consider a hands-free phone.

Before beginning the consultation:

- introduce yourself to the interpreter
- describe the phone you are using and where you are (for example private rooms)
- introduce the interpreter to the patient
- ask the patient if they understand the interpreter.

During the consultation:

- sit facing your patient
- speak clearly so the interpreter can hear you

- pause often to allow the interpreter to speak
- talk to your patient, not to the interpreter
- use non-verbal reassurance such as smiling
- if the consultation takes a long time, take a short break after 30 minutes
- clearly indicate when the session has ended.

### What is the Doctors Priority Line?

It is a phone interpreting service that helps medical practitioners to communicate with their non-English speaking patients.

The service uses more than 2600 professional interpreters and covers more than 160 languages and dialects.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) provides this service through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National).

### Why use the Doctors Priority Line?

The Doctors Priority Line provides assurance that:

- you are working with a professional interpreter
- confidentiality and dignity are protected
- there is mutual understanding between you and your patient.

## Who can use the Doctors Priority Line?

General Practitioners and medical specialists can use the service when providing services that are:

- claimable under Medicare
- delivered in private practice to patients that are Australian citizens, permanent residents, or holders of any type of temporary protection visas.

## How do I use the Doctors Priority Line?

- Complete the online client registration form on the TIS National website available at: [www.tisnational.gov.au/register](http://www.tisnational.gov.au/register).
- You can register when you make your first call – just allow a few extra minutes.
- Once registered you will be provided with a client code. Please always quote this code when you use the service.
- You and your receptionist can also pre-book phone interpreting services by completing the form on the TIS National website at: [www.tisnational.gov.au/Agencies/Forms-for-agencies/New-Job-booking-form](http://www.tisnational.gov.au/Agencies/Forms-for-agencies/New-Job-booking-form)

## How quickly will TIS National respond?

TIS National gives priority to Doctors Priority Line callers over other callers in the queue. A phone interpreter will generally be provided within three minutes for common community languages.

## What is the interpreter's role?

The role of an interpreter is to facilitate accurate communication with people who do not speak English or whose English is limited.

TIS National interpreters are bound by a professional code of ethics which requires them to:

- interpret information accurately and honestly
- maintain absolute confidentiality
- be impartial and objective
- act in a professional manner at all times.

TIS National's policy is to use the highest credentialed interpreter available. Requests for specific interpreters are not encouraged for this reason.

## Understand your non-English speaking patients

The Doctors Priority Line:

- is a free phone interpreting service for medical practitioners in private practice who provide Medicare-rebateable services
- is available at all times, across Australia for the cost of a local call (from a land line)
- gives you priority access to more than 2600 interpreters and more than 160 languages and dialects
- is private and confidential.

## Questions or more information

If you need more information or have any questions about the service you can:

- phone TIS National's Language policy liaison team on 1300 575 847
- visit the Department of Social Services website: [www.dss.gov.au/free-interpreting](http://www.dss.gov.au/free-interpreting)

## Feedback

We value your feedback. It helps us improve this service for your future use.

For feedback, compliments or suggestions about the Free Interpreting Service Policy (e.g. eligibility criteria/approved groups) please email: [DSSfeedback@dss.gov.au](mailto:DSSfeedback@dss.gov.au)

or write to  
DSS Feedback  
PO Box 7576  
Canberra Business Centre  
ACT 2610.

To provide feedback on TIS National interpreting services (e.g. availability/quality of interpreters) please complete the online client feedback form available at: [www.tisnational.gov.au/Help-using-TIS-National-services/Feedback-form](http://www.tisnational.gov.au/Help-using-TIS-National-services/Feedback-form)



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