

When can a Doctor decide not to provide an interpreter?

1. Where the information conveyed is short, simple and not important. If the visit is to provide a flu shot, with not much discussion or conversation, then passing notes may be acceptable; however, if the patient has a pre-existing condition that would cause a side effect from the shot, an interpreter may be required.
2. When providing an interpreter is an “[undue burden](#)”. If providing an interpreter for \$75 would have a substantial material effect on the overall resources of the doctor’s office. This may be the case if the doctor’s office has a very few patients and can hardly make ends meet. When a doctor has an active medical practice, it does not matter whether the cost of the interpreter exceeds the amount of the doctor’s appointment. [\(1\)](#)
[\(2\)](#) [\(3\)](#) [\(4\)](#) [\(5\)](#)