



Free Interpreting Service for Pharmacies

The Free Interpreting Service aims to provide equitable access to key services for people with limited or no English language proficiency.

Pharmacies can access the Free Interpreting Service to provide community pharmacy services.



Why pharmacies use interpreters

Australia has a rich cultural diversity. The 2016 census revealed that Australians were born in almost 200 different countries and speak more than 300 languages.

Pharmacies dispense medications that can be dangerous if taken incorrectly and information about medications can be complex. It is essential that people can communicate effectively with staff in pharmacies about the medications they are taking, how to take them correctly and any risks or side effects that may be associated.

Many people also seek general health information and advice from pharmacies as trusted professionals. It is important that the information provided is clearly understood.

Pharmacies use credentialed interpreters to communicate with people who may have limited or no English proficiency. Using interpreters can also protect pharmacists from professional risk.

Services available to pharmacies

Pharmacies can use the Free Interpreting Service to access immediate or pre-booked phone interpreting. Using the service is easy and convenient, it:

- provides access to over 3000 interpreters in over 160 different languages
- connects you to an interpreter within a few minutes
- is private and confidential
- is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Immediate phone interpreting is best for unplanned interactions. To access this, simply call 131 450 and follow the prompts.

Pre-booked phone interpreting is useful for planned interactions, such as Home Medicine Reviews. To pre-book a phone interpreter, use the [online interpreter booking form](#).



Eligibility

Pharmacists and other staff working in pharmacies are eligible for the Free Interpreting Service if:

- the pharmacy has a PBS approval number OR a pharmacist is registered with AHPRA
- they are working in a community setting (hospital pharmacies should refer to their hospital's interpreting policy)
- the client is entitled to Medicare.

Pharmacies can use the Free Interpreting Service to dispense medication, provide general advice and deliver other general pharmacy services, including but not limited to:

- screening and risk assessment
- immunisation
- wound care
- smoking cessation
- opioid substitution therapy
- providing leave certificates.

During 2018-19, a pilot expansion of the program also allows the service to be used for programs delivered under the 6th Community Pharmacy Agreement, this includes:

- Medication Management Programs
 - Home Medicine Reviews
 - MedsChecks, including Diabetes MedsChecks
 - Residential Medication Management Review and Quality Use of Medicine Services
- Medication Adherence Programs
 - Dose administration aids
 - Clinical Interventions
 - Staged supply programs.

Register for a client code

Each pharmacy will need a unique client code to access the service. Pharmacists not associated with a pharmacy can register for their own code.

Registering for a client code is quick and simple. Complete the [online client registration form](#) on the TIS National website or by calling TIS National on 1300 575 847.

1. How to access the Free Interpreting Service
2. Call TIS National on 131 450
3. Provide the operator with the language of the interpreter that you need
4. Provide your client code and the name of the pharmacy or pharmacist
5. Request an interpreter of a particular gender, if required (subject to availability)

More information

- **Read:** about the [Free Interpreting Service](#)
- **Watch:** [videos](#) about TIS National services and how to work with interpreters
- **Order:** free promotional materials from the [online TIS National catalogue](#)
- **Contact TIS National:** on 1300 575 847 or at TIS.FreeInterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au.

