

*California Senate Bill 853
General Questions and Answers
Anthem Blue Cross and
Anthem Blue Cross Life and Health Insurance Company*

1. What is California Senate Bill (SB) 853?

SB853 is a statute enacted by the state of California that requires all California health plans and health insurers to provide language assistance services to their members with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) at no cost.

2. When will Anthem Blue Cross implement changes to support SB853?

Anthem Blue Cross will begin offering language assistance services starting 1/1/09 and Anthem Blue Cross Life and Health Insurance Company will begin offering language assistance services starting 4/1/09.

3. What languages are available to enrollees for translation and oral interpretation services?

Translated documents will be available in the following languages:

- Spanish
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Tagalog

Oral translation assistance is available in additional languages.

4. Why only those five languages?

These five languages were identified as the most common for Anthem Blue Cross and Anthem Blue Cross Life and Health Insurance Company members after conducting a demographic assessment of our membership.

5. What types of documents will be translated and available to our members?

- Applications
- Consent forms, including any form by which an enrollee authorizes or consents to any action by the plan
- Letters containing important information regarding eligibility and participation criteria
- Notices pertaining to the denial, reduction, modification or termination of services and benefits, and the right to file a grievance or appeal
- A plan's explanation of benefits or similar claim processing information that is sent to an enrollee if the document requires a response from the enrollee
- Summaries of covered services, limitations and exclusions

6. How can members request translated documents?

Members can contact Customer Service by calling the phone number on the back of their ID card.

7. How long will it take for a member to receive a translated document?

The health plan has up to 21 days from the request date to supply the document.

8. What are oral interpretation services?

Listening to a language other than English and orally expressing it accurately into another language.

9. How does a member obtain interpretation services?

The member is to contact the Customer Service phone number listed on their member identification card.

10. Will the member be charged a fee for translated documents or oral interpretation services?

No, the services will be available free of charge to the member.

11. Can requests for written translation of a document be made over the phone or does it have to be in writing?

Requests can be made over the phone.

12. Why are we identifying race and/or ethnicity?

Anthem Blue Cross and Anthem Blue Cross Life and Health Insurance Company are required by regulations developed by the state of California to develop a demographic profile for each member. This requirement specifically requires Anthem Blue Cross and Anthem Blue Cross Life and Health Insurance Company to ask members their spoken language preference, written language preference, race and ethnicity.

13. Will Anthem use this information to determine eligibility or insurability?

The information pertaining to language and ethnicity is being sought for purposes of complying with state and federal laws that may require materials be made available to you, or translated for you, in a language other than English. This information will not be used in determining eligibility or insurability.