

3.1 What Your ELLs Absolutely Need to Know About Using U.S. Health Care

While no guidelines have been established in the U.S. as to what ELLs should be taught to prepare them for using health care in the United States, the following list suggests some basic, essential topics for teachers to address. The list takes into account research on health disparities, patient safety, health care communication challenges, and cultural and linguistically appropriate health care. It also considers countless educator anecdotes of learners' struggles to get their communication and care needs met in U.S. health care. For more information on the suggestions below, see [3.12, ESOL Health Care Tips](#), and the resources in Sections [1](#) and [2](#) of this toolkit.

- **The right to an interpreter in U.S. health care and how to ask for one**
- Where/how to access affordable care in the learner's area
- Delaying health care = higher costs for care and harder to treat problems
- The patient's right and responsibility to ask questions of and seek clarification from health care providers
- ELLs are not alone in their struggles and frustrations with accessing U.S. health care. Many highly educated, native-English-speaking people in the U.S. have trouble communicating in health care. **Normalize** these challenges so learners won't think it's just them.
- What to do to for a huge hospital bill when you are uninsured or underinsured
- A community resource list for affordable physical and multicultural mental health care; vision and hearing care; women's health care; legal services; and multicultural social services if available

