



**TO:** The Professional Practice Committee

**FROM:** Douglas E. Lentivech

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Amendment to Section 63.11 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to Interpretation and Translation Services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individuals by Mail Order Pharmacies

**DATE:** February 3, 2014

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

## SUMMARY

### Issue for Discussion

Should the Board of Regents amend section 63.11 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education relating to the provision of interpretation and translation services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals by mail order pharmacies?

### Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute (Education Law section 6829[4], as added by Section 3 of Part V of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2012).

### Proposed Handling

The proposed amendment will be presented to the Professional Practice Committee at the February 2014 meeting of the Board of Regents for discussion. It is anticipated that, in order to have the regulation in effect by March 30, 2014 in accordance with Education Law section 6829(4), the proposed amendment will be presented to the Board of Regents for emergency action at the March 2014 Regents meeting. It is further anticipated that the proposed amendment will be presented for permanent adoption at the May 2014 meeting of the Board of Regents.

## **Procedural History**

A Notice of Proposed Rule Making is anticipated to be published in the State Register no later than March 12, 2014. A copy of the proposed amendment is attached. Supporting materials for the proposed amendment are available upon request from the Secretary to the Board of Regents.

## **Background Information**

The 2012 New York State budget legislation included amendments to the Education Law, which amendments are commonly referred to as the SafeRx Law (L. 2012, c. 57, Part V). This law, which generally became effective March 30, 2013, includes provisions to assist LEP individuals who need interpretation and translation services when filling prescriptions at covered pharmacies.

Effective May 30, 2013, the Board of Regents approved regulations affecting those covered pharmacies located within New York State. Following a series of open forums and consultations with stakeholders, the Regents accepted the recommendation that the entire state be considered a single "region." In accordance with the statutory requirements and the analysis of census data, this determination resulted in a requirement that interpretation and translation services be provided in four languages, in addition to English. Other regional determinations were rejected since most led to fewer languages being covered in almost all upstate localities. Therefore, covered New York State pharmacies must now provide competent oral interpretation services and translation services in Chinese, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

The 2012 legislation also required the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health (DOH), to promulgate regulations, effective March 30, 2014, to establish translation and interpretation requirements for mail-order pharmacies. Specifically, Education Law §6829(4) requires the regulations to address the concerns of affected stakeholders and reflect the findings of a thorough analysis of issues including: (a) how persons shall be identified as a LEP individual, in light of the manner by which prescriptions are currently received by mail order pharmacies; (b) which languages shall be considered; (c) the manner and circumstances in which competent oral interpretation services and translation services shall be provided; (d) the information for which competent oral interpretation services and translation services shall be provided; (e) anticipated utilization, available resources, and cost considerations; and (f) standards for monitoring compliance with the regulations and ensuring the delivery of quality competent oral interpretation services and translation services.

Based upon consideration of the factors above, it is proposed that mail order pharmacies sending prescriptions to New York State residents be subject to the same requirements as are now required for covered pharmacies within the State. Specifically, with each initial transaction with patients seeking mail order pharmacy services, mail order pharmacies will provide printed materials, in at least the four above-referenced languages, explaining the availability of competent oral interpretation services and translation services. Persons will be identified as LEP individuals when they request

such oral interpretation services and translation services or when such mail order pharmacy fills a prescription that indicates that the individual is limited English proficient. The manner and circumstances in which competent oral interpretation services and translation services will be provided is by a staff member of the mail order pharmacy or third-party contractor and services will be provided on an immediate basis but need not be provided in-person or face-to-face. The information for which competent oral interpretation services and translation services shall be provided will be prescription medication labels, warning labels and other written materials. With respect to anticipated utilization, available resources, and cost considerations, based upon experience with the existing requirements for translation services in the New York City metropolitan area, the proposed requirements should prove to be neither costly nor logistically difficult for mail order pharmacies. Finally, regarding standards for monitoring compliance with the regulations and ensuring the delivery of quality competent oral interpretation services and translation services, as in all such matters, complaints of non-compliance will be investigated and since out-of-state pharmacies require registration with the Department, they are also subject to the Department's professional discipline processes.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

The proposed amendment will come before the Board of Regents for emergency action at its March 2014 meeting. If adopted at the March meeting, the emergency rule would take effect on March 30, 2014. It is anticipated that the proposed amendment will be presented for adoption as a permanent rule at the May 2014 Regents meeting. If adopted in May, the permanent rule would become effective June 4, 2014.

AMENDMENT TO THE REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF  
EDUCATION

Pursuant to sections 207, 6504, 6507, 6810 and 6829 of the Education Law

1. Paragraph (7) of subdivision (a) of section 63.11 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education is added, effective March 30, 2014, to read as follows:

(7) Mail order pharmacy shall mean a pharmacy that dispenses most of its prescriptions through the United States postal service or other delivery system.

2. Subdivision (b) of section 63.11 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education is amended, effective March 30, 2014, as follows:

(b) Provision of competent oral interpretation services and translation services.

Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (e) of this section:

(1) For purposes of counseling an individual about his or her prescription medications or when soliciting information necessary to maintain a patient medication profile, each covered pharmacy and mail order pharmacy shall provide free, competent oral interpretation services and translation services in such individual's preferred pharmacy primary language to each LEP individual requesting such services or when filling a prescription that indicates that the individual is limited English proficient at such covered pharmacy or mail order pharmacy, unless the LEP individual is offered and refuses such services.

(2) With respect to prescription medication labels, warning labels and other written materials, each covered pharmacy and mail order pharmacy shall provide free, competent oral interpretation services and translation services to each LEP individual filling a prescription at such covered pharmacy or mail order pharmacy in such individual's preferred pharmacy primary language, unless the LEP individual is offered

and refuses such services or the medication labels, warning labels and other written materials have already been translated into the language spoken by the LEP individual.

(3) Translation and competent oral interpretation shall be provided in the preferred pharmacy primary language of each LEP individual, provided that no covered pharmacy or mail order pharmacy shall be required to provide translation or competent oral interpretation of more than seven languages.

(4) The services required by this subdivision may be provided by a staff member of the covered pharmacy or mail order pharmacy or a third-party contractor. Such services shall be provided on an immediate basis but need not be provided in-person or face-to-face.

3. Paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of section 63.11 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education is amended, effective March 30, 2014, as follows:

(1) In accordance with Education Law section 6829(3), each covered pharmacy shall conspicuously post a notice to inform LEP individuals of their rights to free, competent oral interpretation services and translation services. Such notice shall include the following statement in English and in each of the pharmacy primary languages: "Point to your language. Language assistance will be provided at no cost to you." With each initial transaction with patients seeking mail order services, mail order pharmacies shall provide printed materials in English and in each of the pharmacy primary languages, explaining the availability of competent oral interpretation services and translation services. In addition, mail order pharmacies that are nonresident establishments shall provide any required information pursuant to section 63.8(b)(6) of this Part in English and in each of the pharmacy primary languages.