



# Free Interpreting Service for private medical practitioners

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

Private medical practitioners can access the Free Interpreting Service to provide Medicare rebatable services to anyone in Australia who is eligible for Medicare.

## Why should medical practitioners engage an interpreter?

Australia has rich cultural and linguistic diversity. The 2021 census revealed that over 5.5 million Australians speak a language other than English at home. Further, Australians represent over 250 different ancestries and speak more than 350 languages.

Medical practitioners can engage a credentialed interpreter to communicate complex or technical information to patients with limited or no English language proficiency. This can help to ensure accuracy of communication, reduce confusion, save time, and protect practitioners from professional risk. It is particularly important when:

- seeking informed consent
- dealing with patients in a crisis
- assessing patient competence
- dealing with complexity.

## Services available to private medical practitioners

Private medical practitioners can use the Free Interpreting Service to access interpreting services delivered by TIS National, including:

- immediate phone interpreting
- Automated Telephone Interpreting Service (ATIS)
- pre-booked phone interpreting
- on-site interpreting, and
- video remote interpreting.

Immediate phone interpreting is most useful for unplanned interactions. It provides:

- access to more than 2700 interpreters in more than 150 different languages
- interpreting services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- connection to an interpreter within a few minutes of calling.

Pre-booked phone interpreting is useful for planned medical appointments, or if you need to request a less common language.

When phone interpreting is not suitable, TIS National can arrange an interpreter to arrive on-site for a face-to-face appointment. This may be important when the consultation is particularly complicated, for example, where a doctor needs to give complex or technical instructions or rely heavily on non-verbal cues.

You may also wish to use on-site interpreting if you have several patients who need the same language interpreter and are able to schedule these so that one interpreter can attend for several appointments.

Video remote interpreting complements TIS National's existing phone interpreting services and allows agencies to connect with an interpreter via a video conferencing platform.





## Eligibility

Under the Free Interpreting Service, private medical practitioners are defined as general practitioners, nurse practitioners and approved medical specialists.

Private medical practitioners are eligible to access the Free Interpreting Service when delivering services that are:

- Medicare-rebatable
- delivered in private practice
- provided to anyone in Australia who is eligible for Medicare.

Practice support staff working with a private medical practitioner registered with TIS National can also access the service using the same client code.

The Free Interpreting Service can be used for delivering health services, including but not limited to:

- arranging appointment times
- undertaking health consultations
- developing health plans
- providing medical test results.

The Free Interpreting Service cannot be used for:

- non-eligible allied health services
- patients who are not eligible for Medicare
- state funded public health services, such as services provided in hospitals.

## Register for the Free Interpreting Service

Each practitioner will need a unique client code to access the service.

To register for a client code, complete the online [client registration form](#) on the TIS National website. If you require assistance with registering contact TIS National on 1300 575 847 or [tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au).

## To access the Free Interpreting Service

1. Call TIS National on 1300 131 450 to access immediate phone interpreting. This is a priority line for Medical Practitioners to access immediate phone interpreting.
2. Provide the operator with the language and gender (if specified) of the interpreter that you need.
3. Provide your client code and the name of the medical practitioner the operator.

You can easily request and manage all of your pre-booked phone, video remote, and on-site interpreter bookings through TIS Online. All agencies registered with a TIS National account are automatically registered to use TIS Online.

## More information

- **Read:** about the Free Interpreting Service: [tisnational.gov.au/FIS](https://tisnational.gov.au/FIS)
- **Read:** about how to access TIS National's online booking system [TIS Online](#)
- **Watch:** videos about TIS National services and how to work with interpreters: [tisnational.gov.au/videos](https://tisnational.gov.au/videos)
- **Order:** free promotional materials from the online TIS National catalogue: [tisnational.gov.au/promomaterials](https://tisnational.gov.au/promomaterials)
- **Contact:** TIS National Free Interpreting Service Team on 1300 575 847 or [tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au)



**Medical Practitioners' Priority Line 1300 131 450**  
24 hours a day, every day of the year