

Preferred Language Spoken

DOs and DON'Ts of PLS Reporting

Preferred Language Spoken (PLS) is the language a patient prefers to be used when communicating with the health care community.

- DO** ensure your facility can collect and report any possible language a patient may state.
- DO** spell write-in languages correctly.
- DO** use valid 3-digit code abbreviations from either HCAI's regulatory code list or the ISO 639-2 list.
- DO** report only languages, their valid 3-digit codes, or "Unknown" for PLS.
- DO** report only one language for each patient.
- DO** use "Unknown" only for unconscious patients who never speak during the course of treatment and the PLS cannot be determined.
- DO** report the language a patient is using to communicate with staff if the patient refuses to self-declare a language.
- DO** report a child's language as the language of the parent or caretaker communicating with the physician.
- DON'T** report phrases like "Other", "Refused", "Multiple" or "Bilingual", etc. in the PLS field.
- DON'T** report multiple languages.
- DON'T** report "Unknown" for patients who are communicating or are accompanied by someone who can indicate the patient's preferred language.
- DON'T** use invalid abbreviations for a language.
- DON'T** report a language that is different from what the patient indicates.
(i.e. Don't report American Indian if the patient indicates Navajo.)

For further details, please see the Preferred Language Spoken section of the Reporting Manuals or contact your assigned analyst.