



## Using the Free Interpreting Services Medical Practitioners' Priority Line – A guide for GPs and practice staff

The **Medical Practitioner Priority Line** is a free, 24/7 phone interpreting service provided by TIS National for private medical practitioners and their staff delivering Medicare-rebatable services.

### Step 1: Register for the Free Interpreting Services

Each GP must have a unique client code to access the service. Nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives, and approved medical specialists are also eligible to register for their own code

- Register online: <https://tisonline.tisnational.gov.au/registeragency> or call **1300 575 847** for help.
- If you work across multiple practices, a separate code is required for each practice.

### Step 2: Accessing an interpreter

Practice staff can perform this step on behalf of the GP and transfer the interpreter to the GP when the appointment starts.

1. Call the Medical Practitioner Priority Line: **1300 131 450**
2. Provide:
  - The TIS client code and name of GP
  - The practice name and best contact number
  - The patient's name ('confidential' is also acceptable) and gender
  - The language required (ask the patient their preferred language)
  - The gender required (ask the patient if they have a preference)
  - If applicable, mention it is a mental health consultation (some interpreters will not interpret for mental health consults)
3. When the interpreter joins the call, ask them to stay on the line while the call is transferred to the GP.

4. Note the job number provided once an interpreter is connected and record it in the patient notes. This is used as reference if the line is disconnected or if a complaint is lodged.
5. The GP puts the phone on speaker so both the GP and patient can hear the interpreter.

### Other tips for GPs and practice staff

- For uncommon languages, book in advance. Common languages are typically connected within 2–3 minutes.
- If a patient declines an interpreter but clearly needs one, you can explain it's needed for a safe and clear consultation.
- Confirm the patient understands the interpreter's role and that it's confidential.
- Talk directly to the patient, not the interpreter.
- If you suspect the interpreter is adding extra information, remind them to only interpret what is said.
- Use first-person language, speak slowly, and pause often.
- If the patient declines the interpreter after connection and introductions, hang up and request a new one.
- If there's noise or the interpreter seems distracted, hang up and get another.

### Support and more information

- Visit: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)
- Call TIS National: **1300 575 847**
- Email: [tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au)



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