

# 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 OSHPD's regulatory code list and 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.**

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