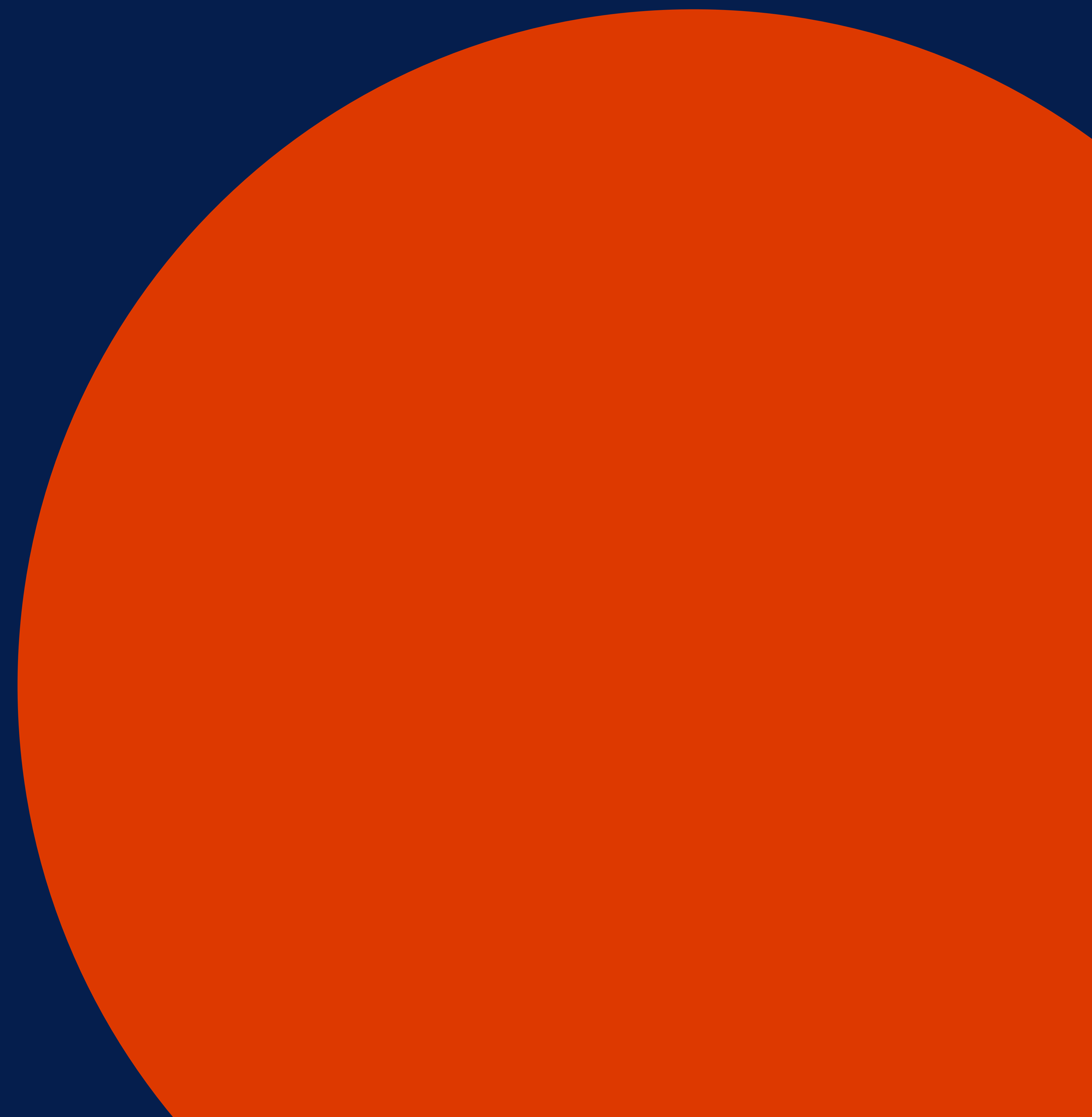


boostlingo

Healthcare Interpretation Priorities 2024

Harnessing technology to address
health equity challenges



Contents

Introduction	2
Methodology	3
Glossary	4
New Section 1557 Ruling - Standards for Remote Interpreting & Training	5
Executive Summary	7
Section 1: The shift from in-person to remote interpreting	10
1.1 Rise in demand of interpretation services	
1.2 Shift to remote interpretation	
1.3 Tailored interpretation solutions	
Section 2: Cost, efficiency, and quality challenges	14
2.1 Cost is top of mind	
2.2 Organization size influences challenges	
Section 3: Interpretation needs vary by organization size	17
3.1 Interpretation volume predictions by organization size	
3.2 Modality usage predictions by organization size	
Section 4: The path forward: an adaptable solution for unique needs	20
4.1 Small organizations and on-demand interpretation	
4.2 Mid to large organizations and a centralized solution	
Looking forward	23
Appendix	25

Introduction By



Merrie Wallace

MN BSN, CRO of Boostlingo

As a registered nurse with a background in managing transplant patients, I have always been driven by the desire to make a difference in healthcare. My journey has taken me from the frontline of patient care to focusing on process improvement and technology, with a keen interest in enhancing the quality of care through innovative solutions.

Throughout my career, I have worked extensively in the EHR world, automating documentation and the delivery of care, and implementing safety measures such as barcode scanning at the point of administration. These experiences have reinforced my belief in the power of technology to improve healthcare outcomes.

When the opportunity with Boostlingo arose, it was clear that this was a chance to make a significant impact in an area of growing importance—language access. The increasing diversity in the US and worldwide, coupled with regulatory requirements, underscores the critical need for high-quality interpretation services. My firsthand experience with the challenges of language barriers in patient care made this role a logical and exciting next step.

At Boostlingo, we are committed to delivering remote interpreting services and technology to meet the evolving needs of healthcare providers. The pandemic has accelerated the shift towards virtual care, and remote interpreting has proven to be a cost-effective and high-quality solution. It allows healthcare providers to offer on-demand interpretation within seconds, ensuring timely and effective communication with patients.

Our mission is to provide healthcare organizations with the tools and resources they need to offer seamless language access throughout the patient journey. This is not only a requirement under Section 1557 but also a crucial aspect of delivering equitable care to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) patients.

As we move forward, we continue to innovate and expand our services to meet the growing demand for interpretation. Our goal is to help healthcare providers navigate the challenges of language access with cost-effective, high-quality solutions that improve patient outcomes and compliance. Thank you for your interest in our report. We look forward to sharing our insights and strategies for advancing language access in healthcare.



Methodology

Boostlingo surveyed 203 Healthcare workers at small, mid, and large organizations from March 22 to March 28, 2024. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method.

This approach involved drawing participants from a list of healthcare professionals who have previously interacted with our website. While this method does not guarantee a sample representative of the broader population of healthcare workers, it allowed us to quickly collect valuable insights from a relevant subset

of the industry. The familiarity of the participants with interpretation services ensured a high likelihood of engagement.

The main limitation of this study is the non-random nature of the sampling method, which might introduce selection bias and affect the generalizability.

Additionally, the relatively small sample size for mid-sized organizations could limit the accuracy of comparisons across different organization sizes.

Survey participants



**Small organizations
(n=112)**

Respondents who work at a healthcare organization with 1-50 employees.



**Mid organizations
(n=21)**

Respondents who work at a healthcare organization with 51-200 employees.



**Large organizations
(n=70)**

Respondents who work at a healthcare organization with 200+ employees.



**Healthcare workers
(n=203)**

All respondents working at healthcare organizations. 68 are Director level or higher.

Glossary

Video remote interpreting (VRI)

Video remote interpreting is delivered over a video platform when the interpreter or at least one participant is in a remote location. The user initiates a video call with an interpreter as he or she starts an encounter with the other participant.

Over-the-phone interpreting (OPI)

Phone interpreting is an audio-only interpretation service conducted over the phone (or on an internet-connected device such as a computer or tablet) when the interpreter or the participant is in another location.

In-person interpreting

In-person or on-site interpreting is a language service where a qualified interpreter is physically present at the location where language support is needed. For example, an interpreter is in the same location as a patient and doctor during a medical appointment and interprets their discussion.

Limited English proficiency (LEP)

Limited English proficiency (LEP) refers to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Section 1557 mandates that federally-funded healthcare providers offer appropriate language services to LEP persons to prevent discrimination based on national origin.

New Remote Interpreting Standards in Section 1557

The 2024 Section 1557 ruling established new standards and requirements for video and phone interpreting services in healthcare settings. These aim to ensure high-quality and accessible remote interpretation for individuals with LEP or disabilities.

Technology Requirements

- Video and phone interpreting technology must provide clear, high-quality audio and video transmission without lags or interruptions.
- Technology must be accessible to individuals with disabilities and compatible with assistive technologies.

Interpreter Qualifications

- Remote interpreters must be qualified, with skills and training to interpret accurately over video or phone in a medical context.
- Emphasis on using qualified interpreters rather than untrained individuals like family members.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Providers must ensure the privacy and confidentiality of health information during remote interpreting sessions, complying with HIPAA regulations.

Availability and Response Time

- Video and phone interpreters must be available without unreasonable delays to improve timeliness of care.

Quality Assurance

- Providers should implement quality assurance measures, regularly assessing technology, interpreter performance, and patient satisfaction.

By understanding and adhering to these updated standards, healthcare providers can ensure remote interpreting services facilitate effective communication for LEP and Deaf or Hard of hearing patients.

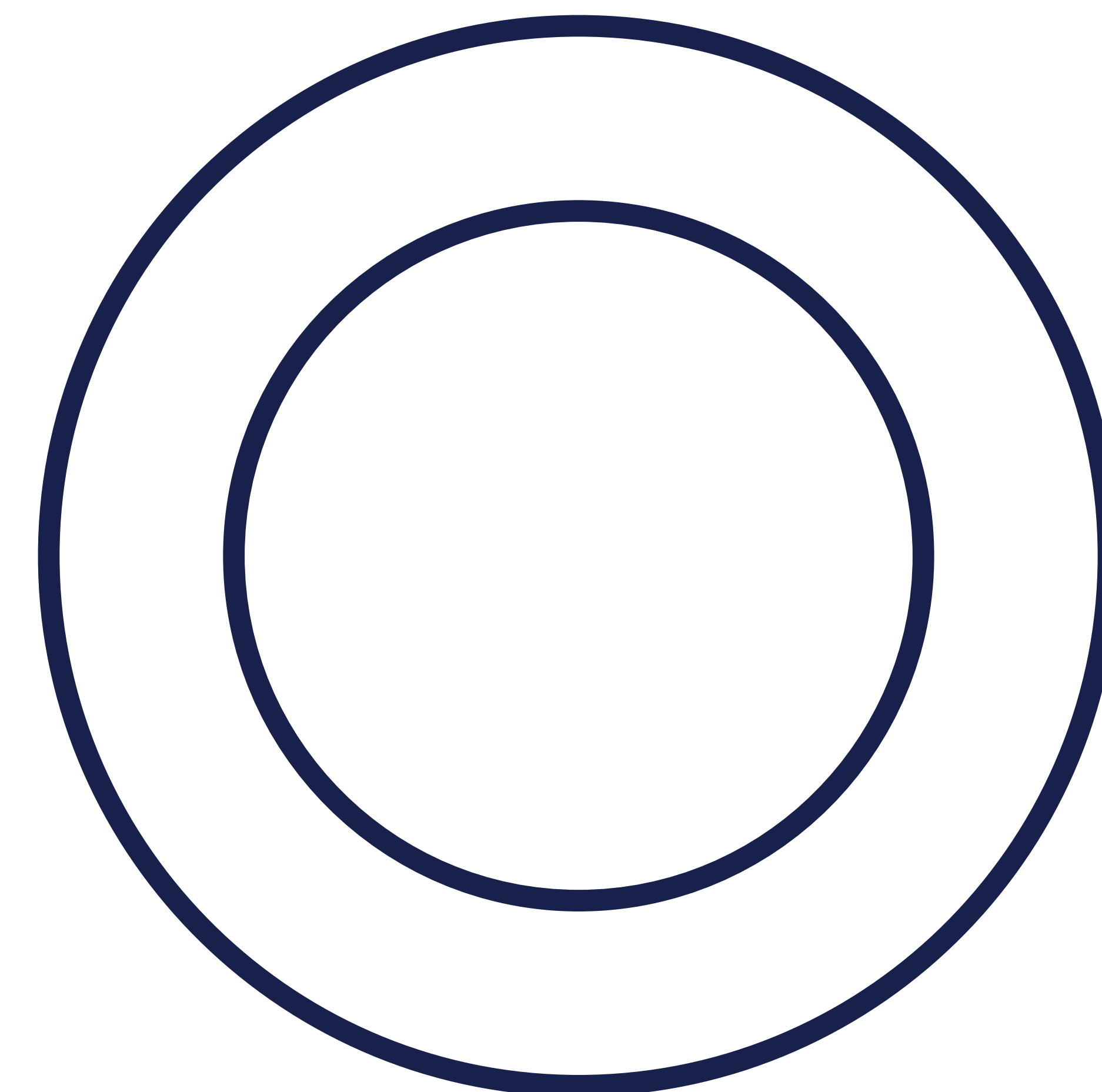
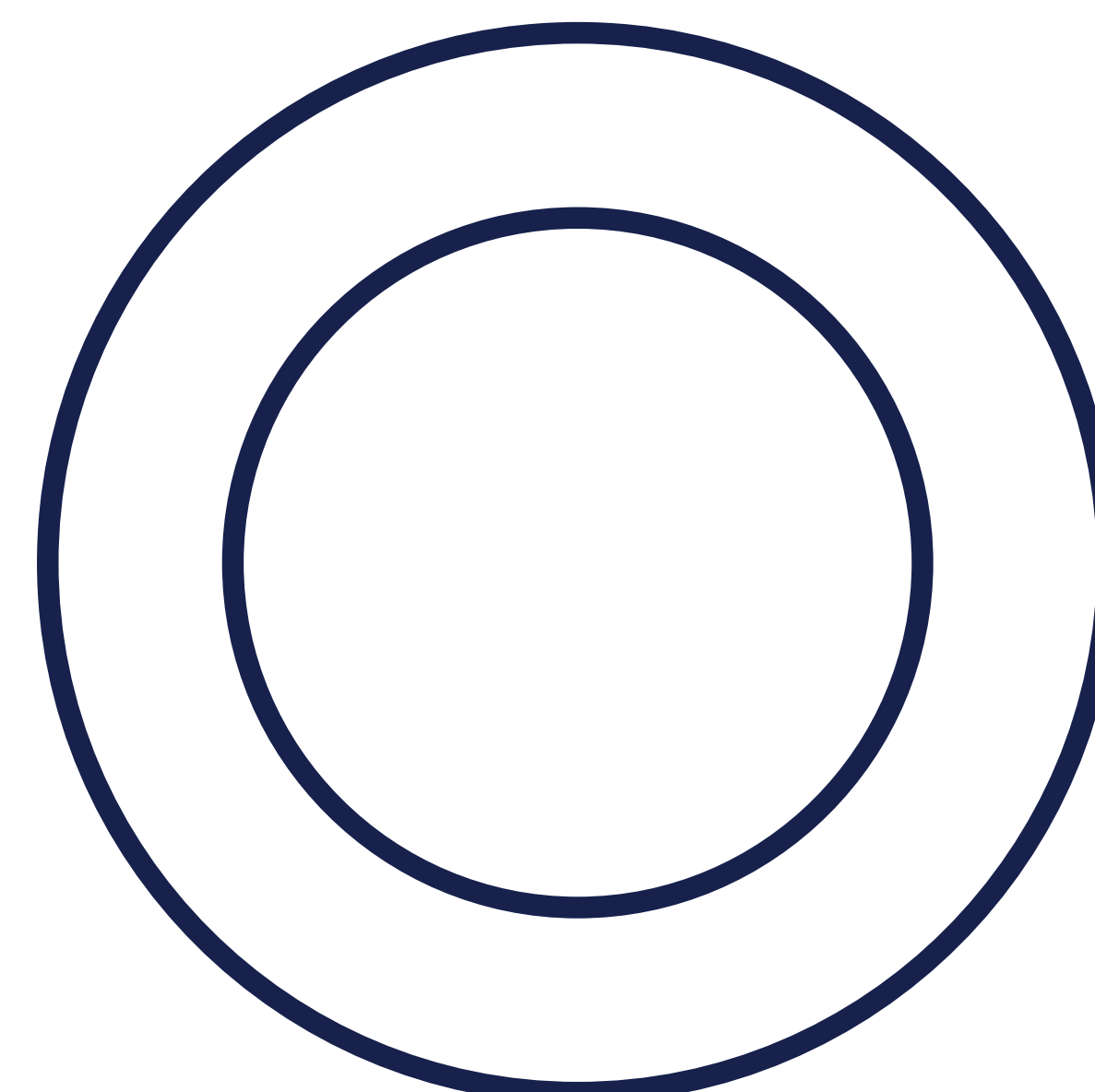
Training Staff to Use Language Services

The updated Section 1557 rules also mandate comprehensive training for healthcare staff on effectively utilizing language assistance services like interpretation and translation. Specifically, the training must cover:

- The organization's policies and procedures for providing language access, including how to access qualified interpreters or translators.
- Proper techniques for working with interpreters to communicate with LEP individuals.
- The organization's policies on auxiliary aids or services, reasonable modifications, and grievance procedures related to disability discrimination.

This mandatory training aims to ensure staff can properly access and utilize interpretation and translation services to facilitate communication with LEP patients and comply with requirements.

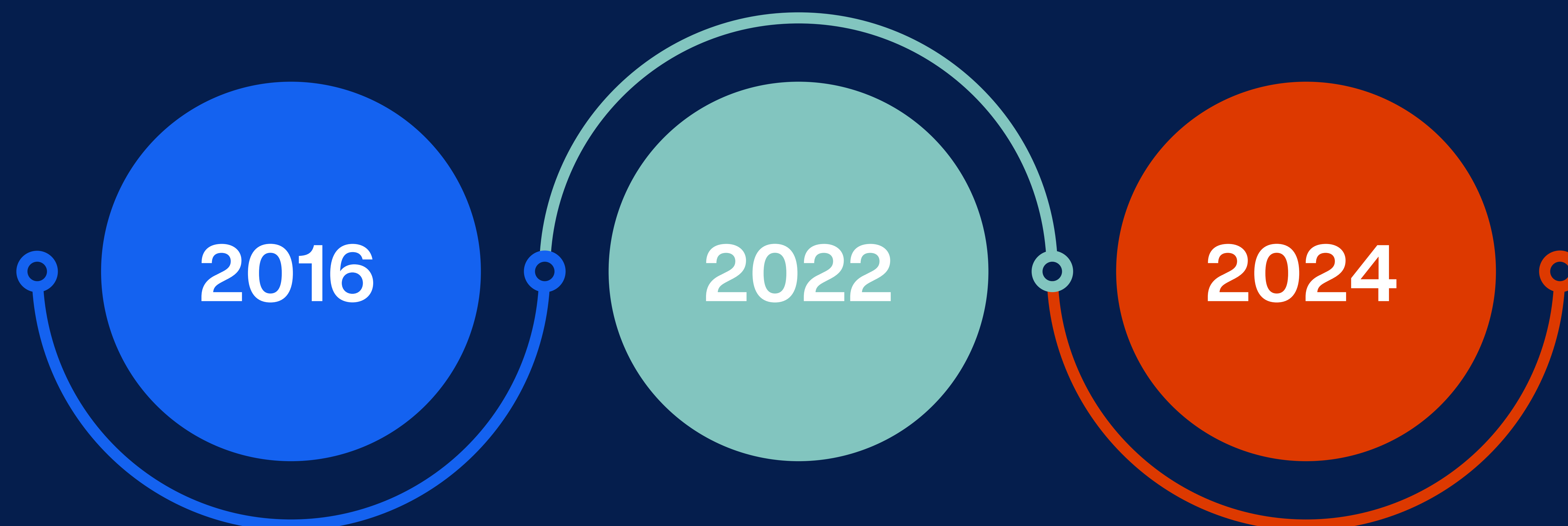
Healthcare organizations must implement this training as part of their language access plan, no later than one year after the effective date of the final 1557 rules. Leaders should look for language service providers with robust staff training and support models to drive proper utilization.



Executive Summary

This year, there will be a scramble for healthcare organizations of all sizes trying to meet the new standards of the Section 1557 ruling. In our first Healthcare Interpretation Priorities report, we uncover a growing demand for remote interpretation services and identify the cost of services as the top challenge. Healthcare organizations' choices in 2024 will shape their compliance with language access laws. These choices will also affect their effectiveness in serving patients with limited English proficiency.

Language access laws in healthcare



The 2016 Section 1557 ruling required covered entities to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals.

Notice for proposed rulings for Section 1557 aimed to broaden applicability and strengthen notice requirements and interpreter qualifications.

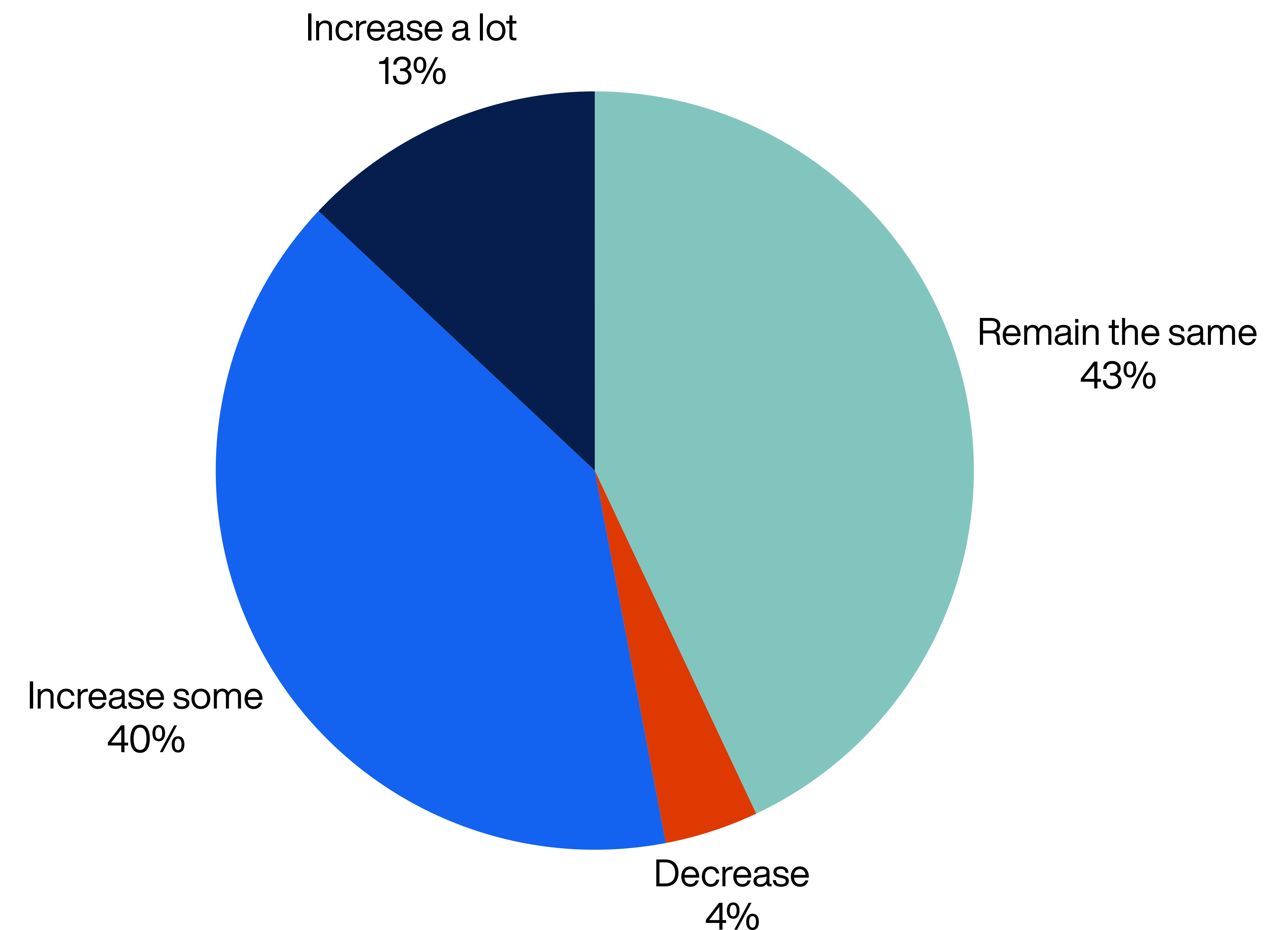
A new ruling expands mandates to telehealth providers and smaller healthcare organizations, and strengthens interpreter and technology standards.

Executive Summary

Demand for remote interpretation is growing

Most healthcare workers agree that in 2024, they expect increases (53%) in or the same amount (43%) of interpretation volume. Only (4%) expect a decrease. To meet this uptick in demand, most healthcare workers plan to use phone and video solutions. Despite in-person interpretation often being the best option for communication, these trends signal that organizations favor remote interpretation services. These remote services offer more flexibility and cost savings.

In 2024, healthcare workers predict their interpretation volume will



In 2024, healthcare workers expect to use these interpretation services more

11%

In-person
Interpretation

57%

Over-the-phone
interpretation

49%

Video remote
interpretation

Executive Summary

Cost is the main challenge for most healthcare organizations

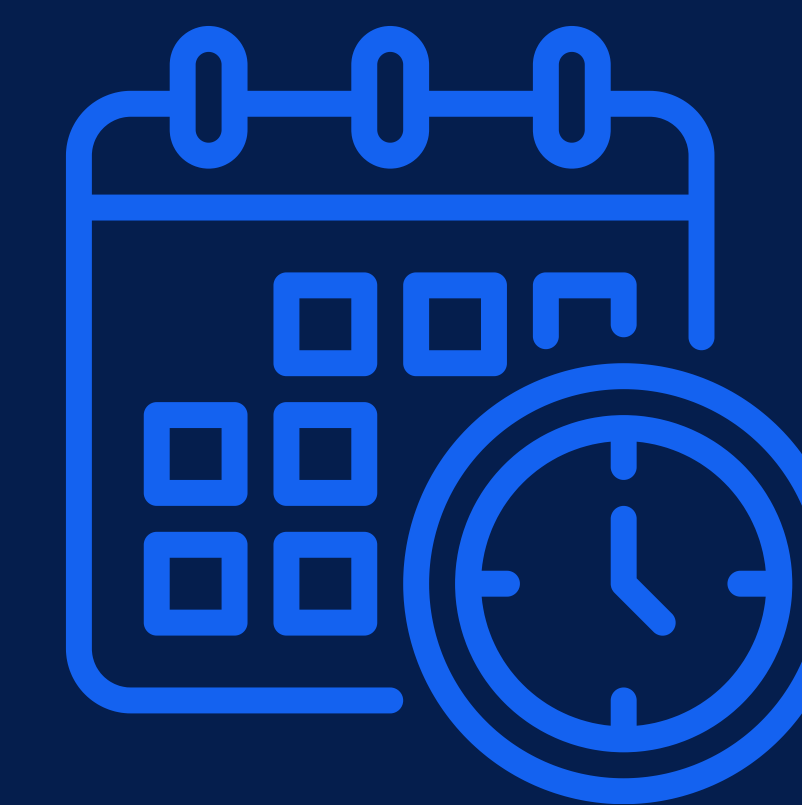
Interpretation services remain a challenge for healthcare organizations due to reasons like cost, difficulty scheduling in person, and the lack of or slow support from their interpretation provider. The cost of interpretation services was cited as the biggest challenge with their current solution by (44%) of healthcare workers.

Remote interpretation services can pose unique challenges to healthcare organizations. These include complicated technology for staff use, low-quality interpreting, and unfilled requests.

Healthcare workers experience these challenges with interpretation services



Cost



Difficulty scheduling
in-person



Support

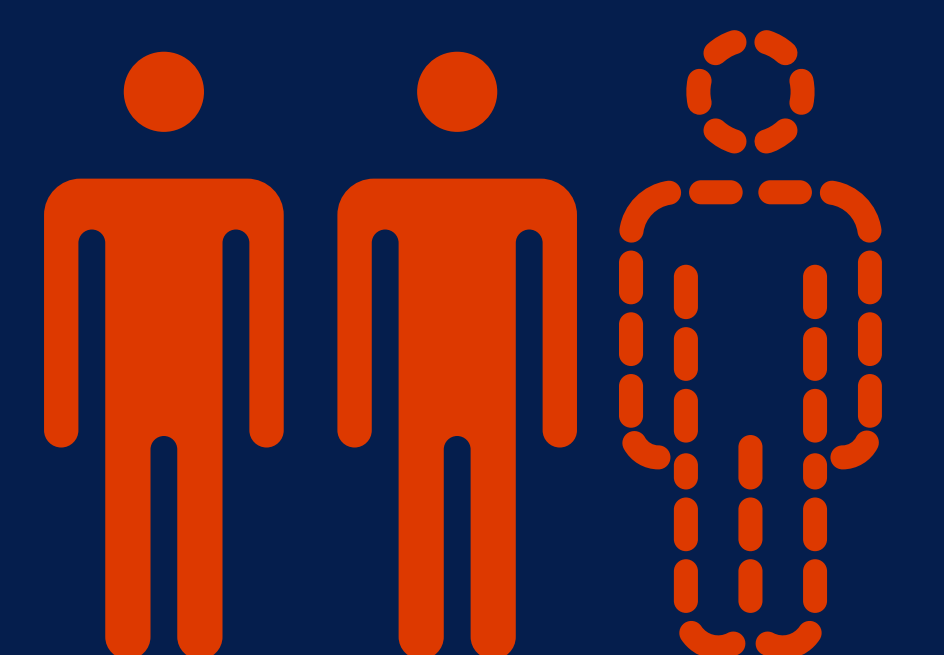
Healthcare workers experience these challenges with remote interpretation



Complicated
technology



Low quality
interpreting



Unfilled
requests

1

The shift from in-person to remote interpreting

Growing LEP patient populations and expanded federal mandates have skyrocketed the demand for interpretation. Providers increasingly leverage remote interpretation services delivered through video or phone to meet these regulatory requirements and accommodate fluctuating demand for services across different languages. This flexible and cost-effective approach allows them to reliably access interpreters as needed and helps reduce costs associated with on-site interpretation services.



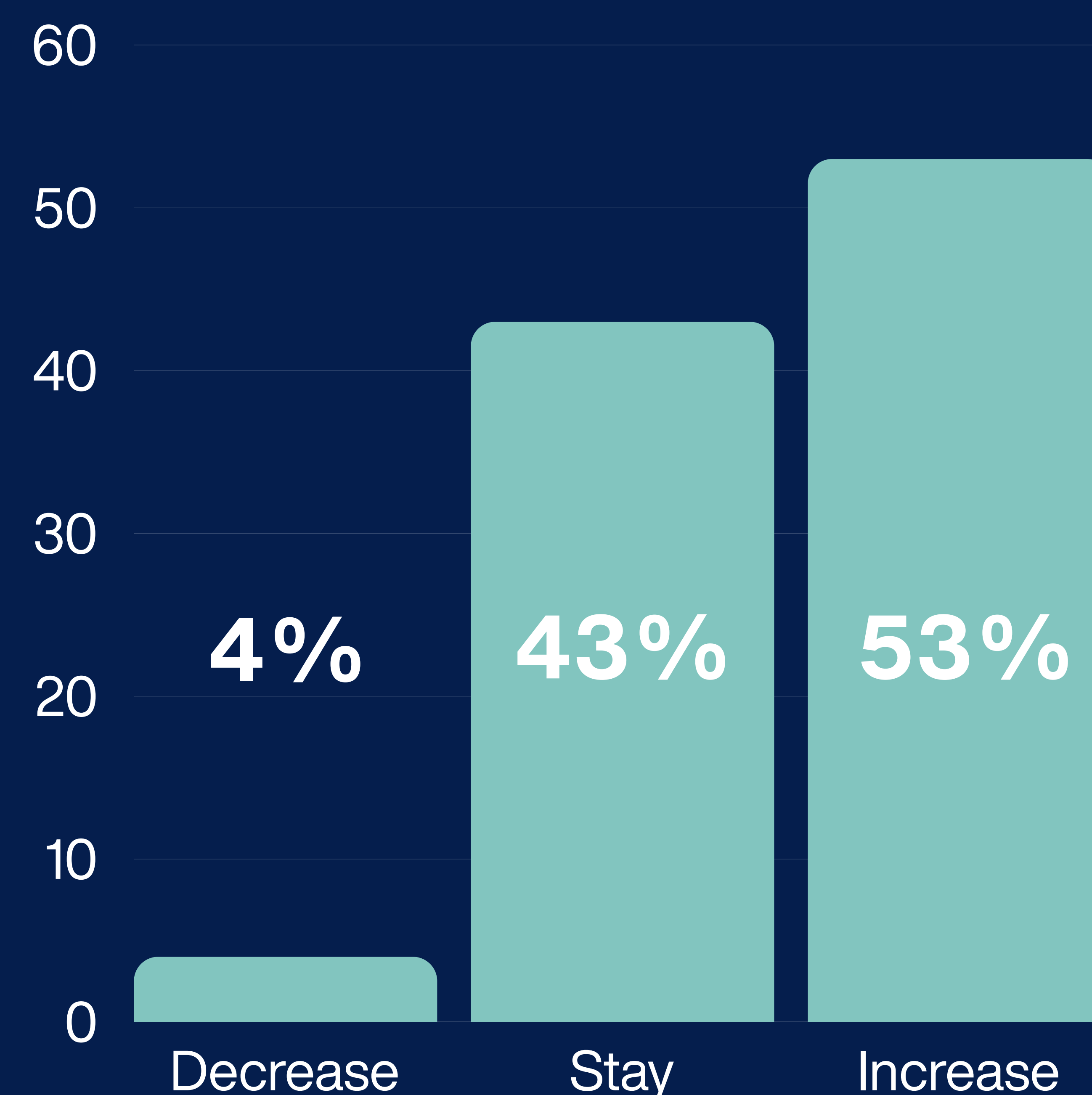
1.1 Interpretation volume in healthcare is expected to grow

Most healthcare workers anticipate their interpretation volume will rise in 2024, with (53%) predicting an increase and only (4%) expecting a decrease. The expected growth is driven by factors like growing diversity in the US, regulatory requirements, and emphasis on health equity. An aging population with higher LEP rates and advancements in remote interpretation technology are also contributing factors.

In light of these converging trends, healthcare organizations should assess their current capabilities and projected needs to identify and fill gaps. Best practices include adding staff interpreters, adopting video and phone interpreting, and implementing robust language access policies and training.

Investing in qualified interpreters ensures better communication and improved care outcomes. As the volume of interpretation increases, prioritizing quality is essential for compliant, patient-centered care.

Healthcare workers predict interpretation volume in 2024 will



1.2 Healthcare organizations plan to use more OPI and VRI

About half of healthcare workers plan to increase their use of phone (57%) or video (49%) interpreting services this year. Moreover, only (11%) plan to increase their use of in-person interpretation services. This trend highlights a shift towards remote interpreting to meet the growing demand for language services.

For instance, a nurse in a busy hospital might find that phone interpreting allows for quicker access to language support during patient intake, reducing wait times and improving patient flow. In contrast, the lower priority on in-person services reflects logistical challenges such as scheduling and availability of staff interpreters.

Technology remains at the forefront of healthcare workers' minds for interpretation. Only (5%) expect to decrease the use of technology, and (13%) are looking to AI to assist with interpretation. For an effective and safe roll-out, guardrails on when it's appropriate to use AI to help with interpreting will need to be established. This could look like AI being used for low-risk administrative tasks while human interpreters are required for medical interactions to ensure accuracy and empathy.

Healthcare workers plan to increase their use of these interpretation services in 2024



11%

In-person



57%

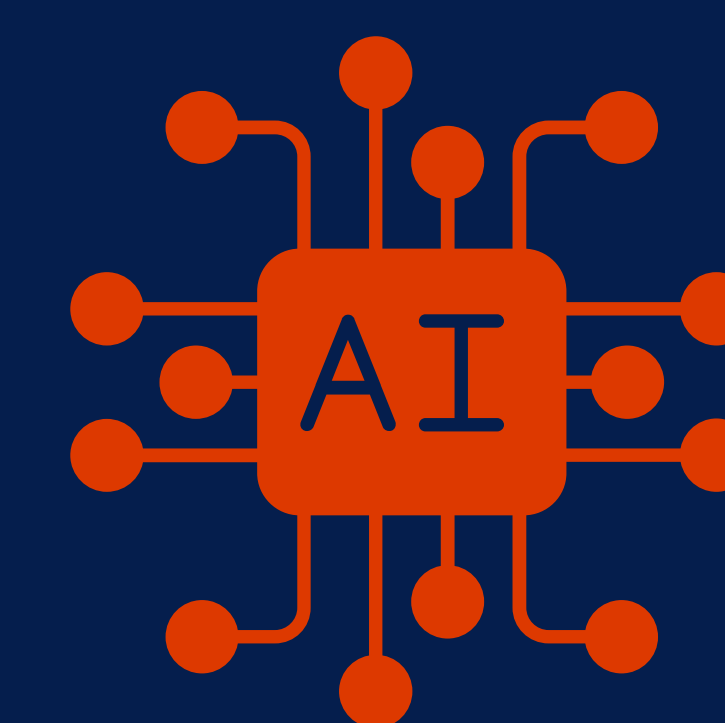
Phone



49%

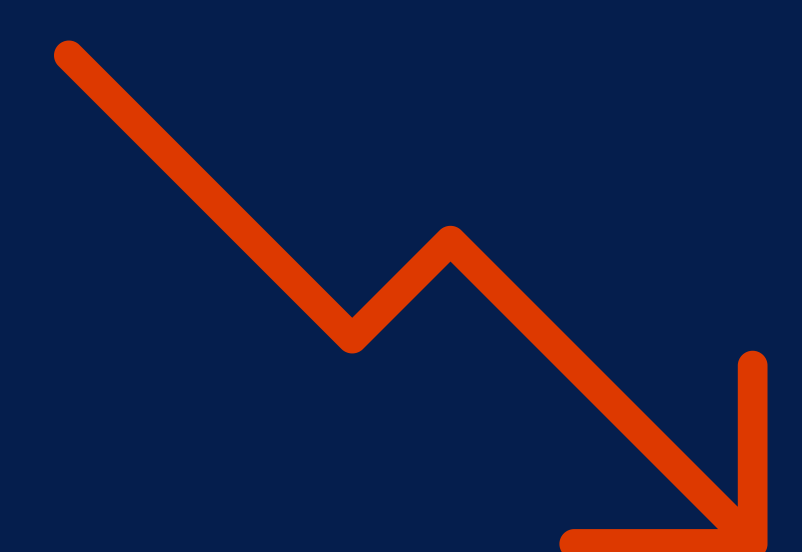
Video

Healthcare workers predict in 2024



13%

Plan to use AI to assist
with interpretation



5%

Will require less
technology for
interpretation

1.3 Healthcare organizations are tailoring interpretation solutions to their needs

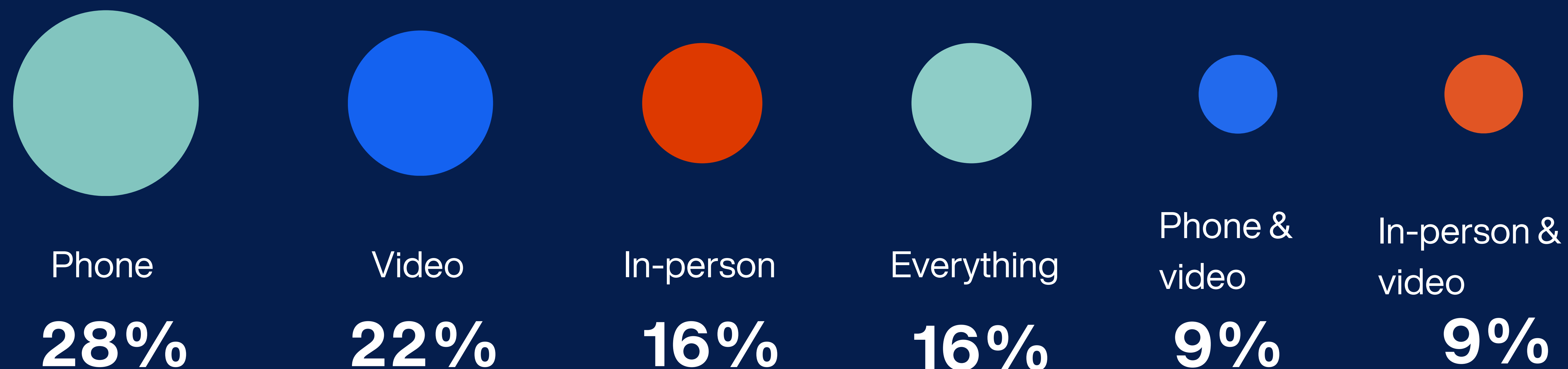
With interpretation volume increasing and healthcare organizations operating in unique ways, tailored interpretation solutions are on the rise. Healthcare workers say they have been using in-person, phone, and video interpreting to communicate with LEP patients. 41% reported using in-person interpreting, while 55% are using phone or video interpreting.

Each modality has its own unique benefits. Healthcare organizations combine different modalities, like in-person and video, to optimize language support for their unique needs.

For example, an orthopedic institute that primarily uses phone interpreting across its entities can add video services to offer a preferred face-to-face option for their elderly patients. On the other hand, a hospital might primarily rely on their in-person staff interpreters and use phone interpreting through a third party to fill in for rare languages or last-minute appointments.

While managing different modalities and vendors can be complicated, organizations must develop strategies that best fit their operational workflows and language assistance needs.

Interpretation services healthcare organizations are using today



2

Cost is top of mind followed by efficiency and quality

Interpretation improves communication with LEP and Deaf or Hard of hearing patients, improving care outcomes. However, interpretation services are considered a cost center, especially for smaller organizations. This perception often drives them to opt for the cheapest service, use untrained interpreters, or forgo an interpreter altogether. Difficulty in scheduling in-person interpretation and low-quality interpreting are also top-of-mind challenges for healthcare organizations.



2.1 Cost of interpretation is top of mind in healthcare

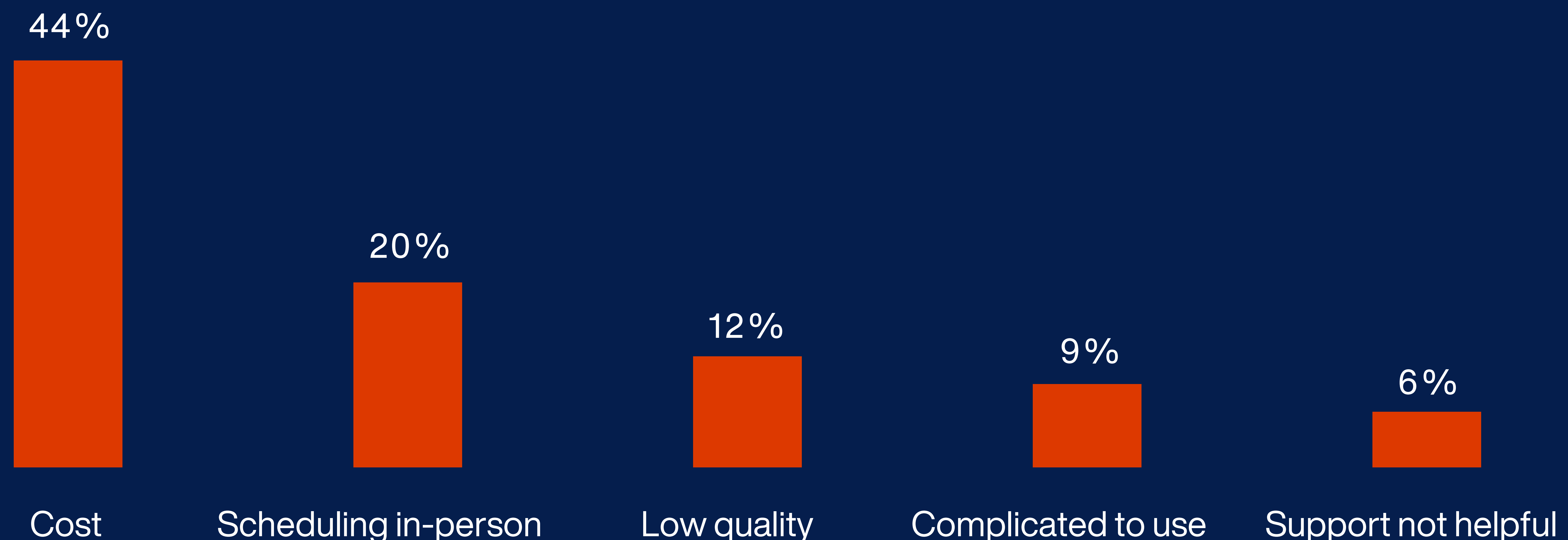
Cost is the top concern among healthcare workers with their current interpretation solutions. (44%) say it's their biggest challenge. This finding represents a significant potential risk, as interpretation services ensure compliance, and facilitate effective communication and equitable care for LEP patients.

Other challenges include scheduling in-person interpreters (20%) and low-quality services (12%).

Additional concerns are complicated-to-use systems for staff (9%) and unhelpful support (6%).

To solve these problems, healthcare organizations can explore cost-effective remote interpretation subscription packages to mitigate cost concerns. Additionally, they can advocate for better reimbursement policies and explore state/federal funding programs to help offset the costs of language services.

Biggest challenge healthcare workers experience with current interpretation solution



2.2 Organization size influences biggest challenge with interpretation services

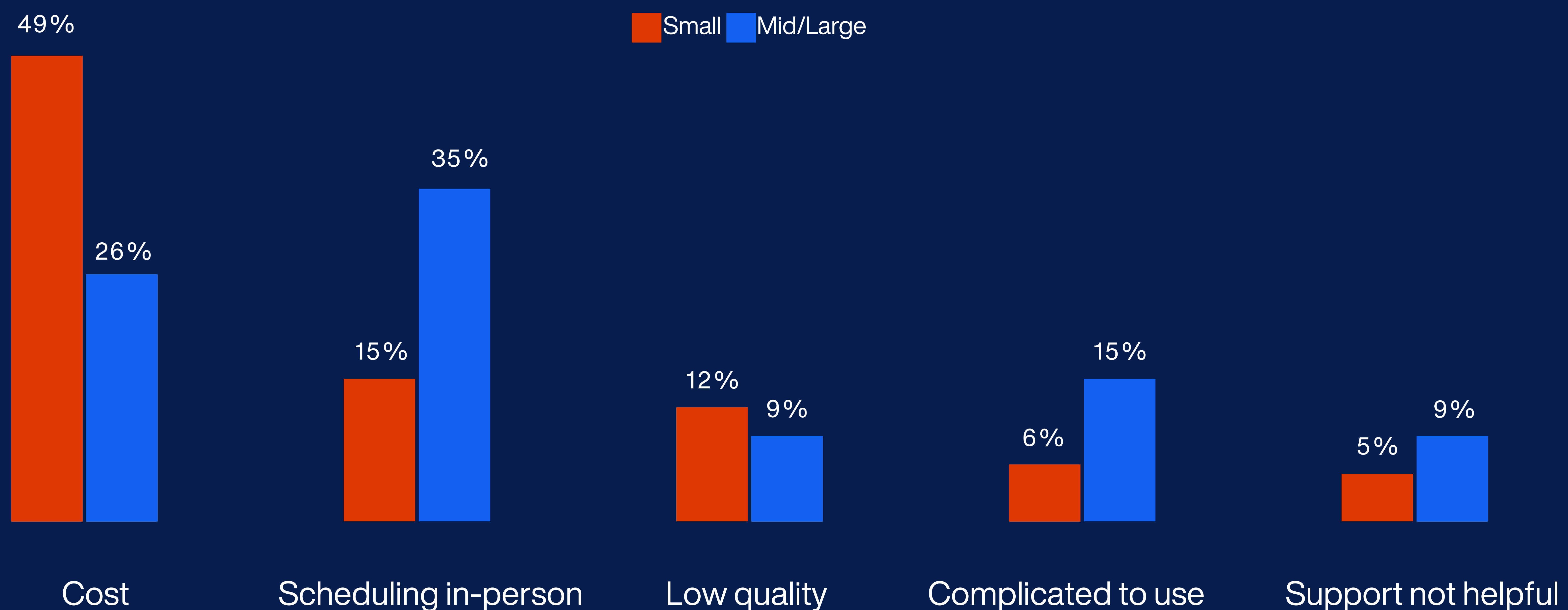
This study found that the primary challenge faced by healthcare workers with interpretation services varies based on the size of their organization. For small healthcare organizations, cost is the most significant hurdle, with (49%) citing it as their biggest challenge with interpretation services.

In contrast, mid-large organizations primarily struggle with operational challenges like scheduling in-person interpreters (35%).

Scheduling a mix of staff and remote interpreters across multiple departments and languages can be inefficient for schedulers, eating up time. Mid-large organizations also struggle with technology that is complicated to use and unhelpful support.

These findings suggest that small organizations benefit most from remote solutions that keep costs low, while mid-large organizations benefit from technology that improves scheduling and usability.

Biggest challenge with current interpretation solution by organization size



3

Interpretation predictions vary by size of organization

Interpretation volume projections for 2024 vary, with small and large healthcare organizations forecasting significant increases while medium-sized organizations have a more conservative outlook. Overall, there is a growing trend towards remote interpretation services, especially video, across all organization sizes.



3.1 Interpretation volume predictions by organization size

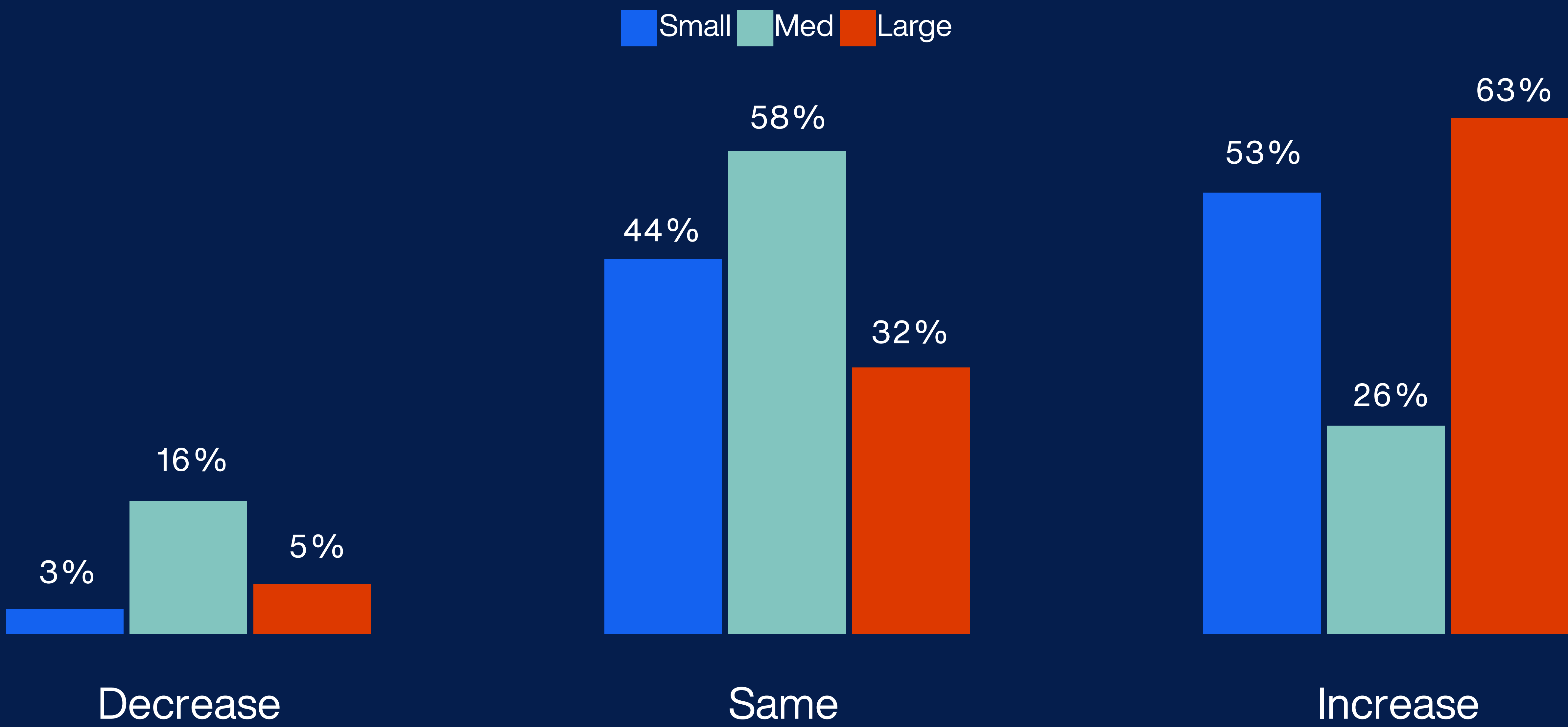
Across different organization sizes, there are contrasting predictions for interpretation volume in 2024. Small (53%) and large (63%) healthcare organizations predict significant increases in their volume this year, while medium-sized (26%) organizations have a more conservative outlook.

This year, a large hospital in a diverse urban area might anticipate a surge in interpretation needs due to an influx of immigrants and refugees. This hospital

will need to up its capacity and efficiency. A small local health clinic, may also see a rise in volume due to expanded mandates under Section 1557. These organizations can benefit from remote interpreting.

Conversely, a medium-sized clinic in a more stable community might expect a steady or even declining need for interpretation services. This clinic might find that its current language support resources are sufficient to meet patient demands.

Healthcare workers report predictions on interpretation volume by organization size



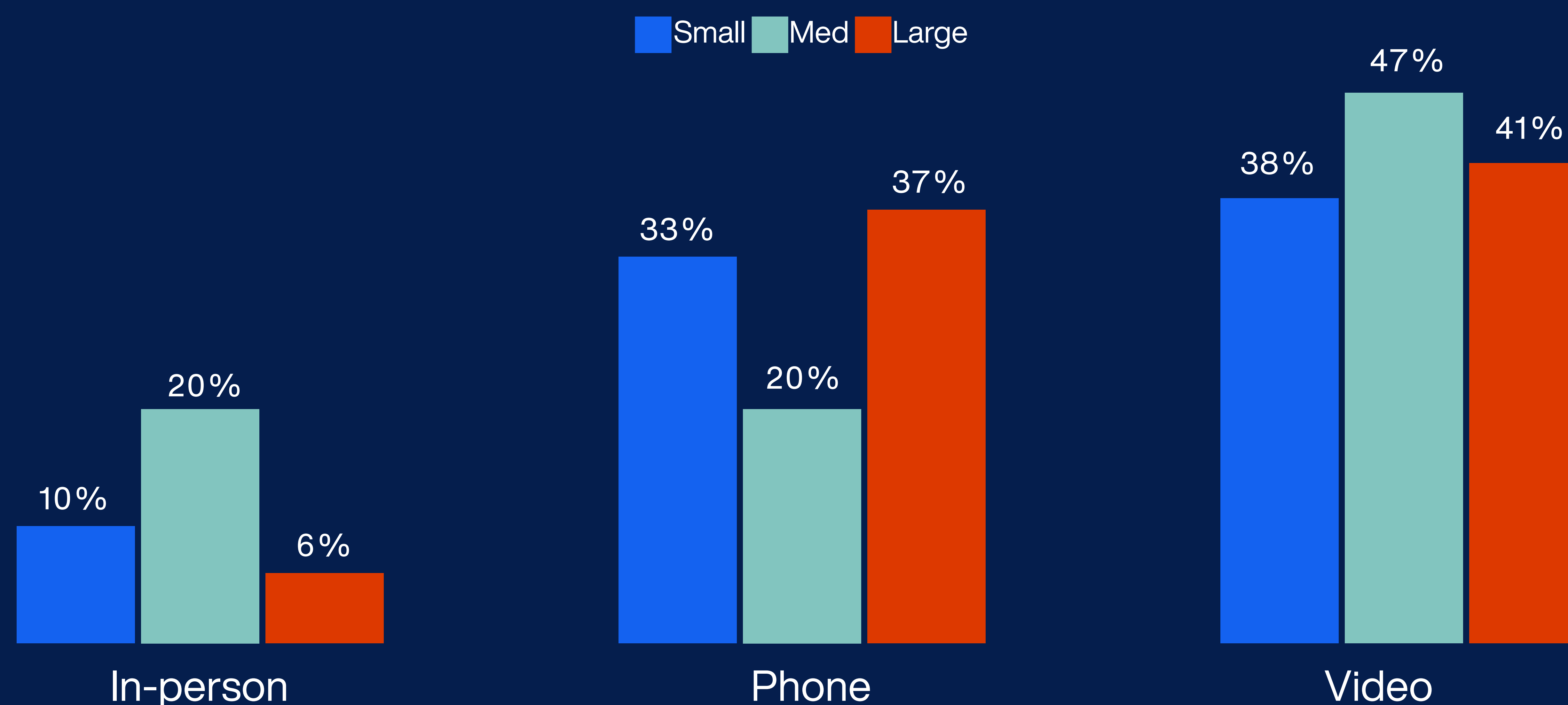
3.2 Modality usage predictions by organization size

There's a clear trend among healthcare workers towards adding more remote interpretation in 2024, particularly video, across all organization sizes. However, phone interpreting remains strong, especially among small and large organizations.

Healthcare leaders should prioritize investing in remote interpretation to address the need for timely and cost-effective language assistance services.

However, the new Section 1557 ruling has updated requirements around remote services. Healthcare leaders must ensure that their investments meet these standards, which include high-quality interpreters, reliable technology, and ease of access. Additionally, staff must be adequately trained to use these services effectively. For example, this could be met through regular training sessions for staff on how to use the new video interpreting system.

Healthcare workers report planning to use these interpretation services more by organization size



4

The path forward: An adaptable solution for unique needs

Healthcare leaders play a crucial role in implementing interpretation solutions. They can determine their organization's operational workflows and specific language needs and invest in interpretation solutions appropriate to their organization. Additionally, they can oversee staff training on how to use the services. This approach ensures health organizations correctly leverage interpretation services to meet LEP patient needs.



4.1 Small Organizations: On-Demand Interpretation

In 2024, (53%) of healthcare workers from small organizations predict increased interpretation volume, while (48%) cite cost as their biggest challenge. Now is the time to invest in on-demand interpretation solutions and explore different pricing models, such as subscription-based options, to help alleviate these cost burdens.

A small clinic might benefit from a subscription-based remote interpretation service that offers flexible pricing and scales according to needs, making high-quality services more accessible and affordable.

When choosing a provider, ensuring quality of remote interpretation helps meet compliance requirements and provide effective patient care.

Leaders should also focus on staff training for using interpretation services effectively. Regular training sessions can ensure staff are comfortable with the system. Additionally, sharing positive impact stories, like how a remote interpreter helped a patient during an emergency, can illustrate the critical role of these services in delivering quality care.



48%

Say cost is their
biggest challenge



53%

Predict their
interpretation volume
will increase in 2024

**Small healthcare organizations plan to
use these interpretation services more**



10%

In-person



33%

Phone



38%

Video

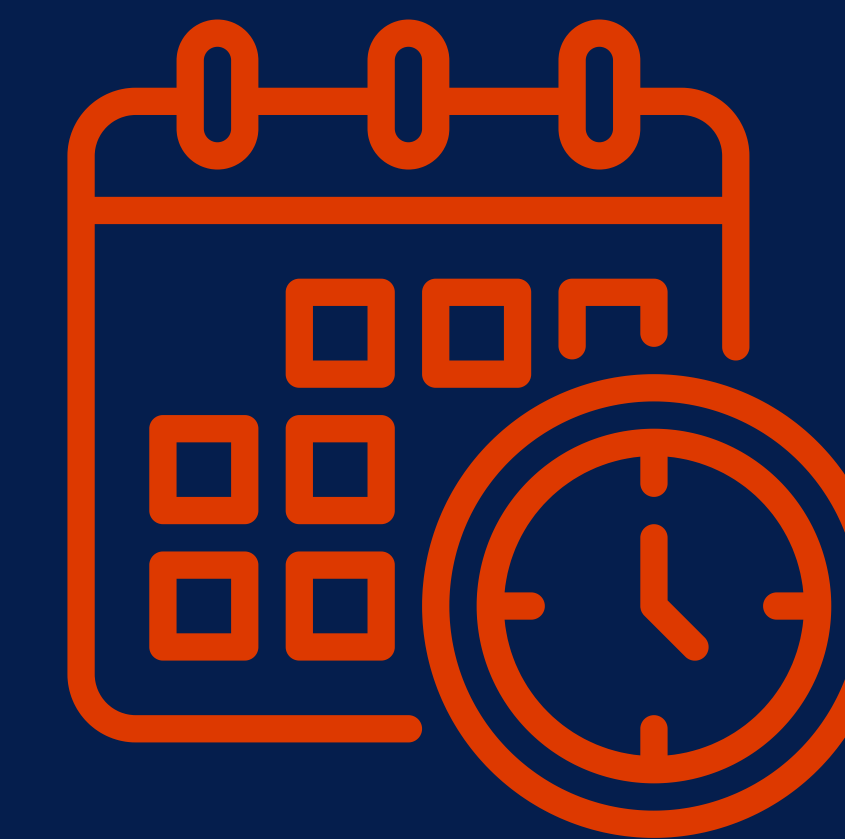
4.2 Mid to Large Organizations: Centralized Solution

With (62%) of healthcare workers in large organizations predicting increased interpretation volume in 2024 and in-person scheduling (35%) and cost (26%) cited as the top hurdles, a centralized interpreter management system with on-demand remote interpreting capabilities can simplify scheduling, improve scalability, and cut costs.

For example, a large hospital might struggle to coordinate interpreters across multiple offices and departments. Implementing an interpreter management system can streamline this process, ensuring interpreters are available when needed, reducing wait times, and improving patient care.

Larger healthcare organizations are embracing remote interpretation, with (41%) planning to increase video and (37%) phone interpretation in 2024. Leaders should consider a system that can handle both remote and in-person services.

Leveraging scheduling technology streamlines workflows and reduces the logistical burden of coordinating interpreters across various vendors and locations. Cost-effective pricing models, such as volume-based discounts or subscription plans, can help alleviate financial constraints, making high-quality interpretation services more sustainable.



35%

Say scheduling
is their
biggest challenge



26%

Say cost
is their
biggest
challenge



62%

Predict
interpretation
will increase in 2024

**Large healthcare organizations plan to
use these interpretation services more**



6%

In-person



37%

Phone



41%

Video

Looking Forward

As the United States becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse, the demand for interpretation services in healthcare settings is expected to rise sharply. The evolving healthcare landscape, characterized by increased regulatory requirements under Section 1557 and the ongoing shift towards remote interpreting services, presents both challenges and opportunities.

Embracing Remote Interpreting

Remote services like video and phone interpreting offer promising opportunities to expand access. However, their effectiveness depends on proper implementation. Healthcare organizations should invest in high-quality solutions that help them meet the new requirements of Section 1557, such as high-quality audio and video, quick access to interpreters, and training standards.

Addressing Cost and Quality Concerns

Cost concerns remain a significant hurdle, particularly for smaller healthcare providers. To mitigate these, healthcare organizations should explore pricing models, such as subscription packages or volume-based discounts, which can provide more predictable costs. Additionally, advocating for better reimbursement policies and exploring state or federal funding programs could offset the costs of providing comprehensive language services.

Streamlining Operations with a Central Solution

Implementing a central interpreter management system could significantly reduce logistical challenges for larger organizations or those struggling with scheduling and operational complexities. Such systems can help manage multiple vendors and resources efficiently, ensuring that the right services are available when and where they are needed.

Preparing for the Future

Healthcare leaders must proactively adapt to these changes. Partnering with service providers that offer comprehensive support for staff training, quality assurance, interpreter training standards, and capacity planning will be essential. As AI continues to integrate into healthcare, establishing clear guidelines and maintaining human oversight will be crucial to ensure the quality and reliability of translation services.

Commitment to Language Access

Looking ahead, it is imperative for healthcare organizations to not only comply with new regulations but to embrace the spirit of these laws by genuinely improving language access. This commitment will ensure that all patients have equitable access to quality healthcare regardless of language.



About Boostlingo

Boostlingo is an industry leader in interpretation technology, trusted by thousands of organizations for language assistance services. From managing on-site and remote interpretation to delivering remote services, Boostlingo helps people communicate without barriers and better serve diverse populations. Boostlingo's product offerings- [Boostlingo IMS](#), [Boostlingo On-Demand](#), [Boostlingo Events](#), and [Boostlingo AI Pro](#)- work where you do, delivering language support across different use cases and settings. These products are powered by the [Boostlingo Hub](#), a network of over 17,000 language professionals that offer interpretation, translation, and other services.

Learn more at boostlingo.com/industries/healthcare

Appendix

Section 1557

Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) makes it unlawful for any health care provider who receives funding from the federal government to refuse to treat an individual—or to otherwise discriminate against the individual—based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Who receives funding?

Federal funding includes grants, property, Medicaid, Medicare Parts A, C and D payments, and tax credits and cost-sharing subsidies under Title I of the ACA.

Resources

- [Language Access & New Section 1557 Ruling](#)
- [Navigating AI in Interpreting](#)
- [Health Equity & Language Access Webinar](#)

Healthcare Success Stories

Orthopedic Institute experienced a surge in demand for interpretation services. They meet compliance requirements and improve patient care with on-demand interpretation.

[Read the case study.](#)

Children's Hospital received multiple language complaints a week with frequent cancelled appointments and unfilled requests. They reduce complaints to a few over seven months with on-demand interpretation.

[Read the case study.](#)

Skin Care Center struggled with cost of services and having limited number of rooms with phones for their OPI services. They save \$12,000 a year with a subscription package and improve operations with on-demand interpretation.

[Read the case study.](#)

Community Hospital System managed multiple vendors and systems for in-person and remote interpreting. They gained oversight of all resources and cut scheduling time in half with a central IMS. And, saved \$250,000 year on interpretation services.