

# ALC Celebrates Signing of the SPEAK Act Strengthening Language Access in Healthcare

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The Association of Language  
Companies (ALC) celebrates the  
passage and signing of the SPEAK Act,  
landmark legislation directing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to  
develop and issue federal guidance on best practices for language access in telemedicine and  
electronic health records systems.



The SPEAK Act was signed into law by President Trump on February 3, 2026.

The Association of Language Companies spent several years advancing this bill, working directly with congressional offices to shape its language and consistently advocating with policymakers to build the support needed for its introduction and final passage. ALC also kept the SPEAK Act front and center through its annual On The Hill advocacy program and provided practical, field-tested recommendations to congressional staff throughout the drafting process.

“The SPEAK Act will require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop and issue guidance on best practices for language access in telemedicine and related health information technology,” said Bill Rivers, ALC’s government affairs advisor. “In developing this guidance, HHS must consult with a broad range of stakeholders, including the language services industry, interpreters, patient advocates, healthcare providers, and telemedicine platform providers.”

The SPEAK Act outlines best practices for topics such as:

Over the past year, ALC’s advocacy program directly engaged congressional staff, submitted policy input, and coordinated with national coalitions to ensure that the perspectives of the language services industry informed legislative development.

ALC focused its advocacy on:

- Facilitating and integrating use of interpreters during a telemedicine appointment
- Providing accessible instructions on how to access telecommunications systems for individuals with limited English proficiency

- Improving access to digital patient portals for individuals with limited English proficiency
- Using video platforms that enable multi-person video calls to support interpretation during telemedicine appointments
- Providing patient materials, communications, and instructions in multiple languages, including text message appointment reminders and prescription information

“Because our industry will be part of the consultative process to develop this guidance, we have the opportunity to help shape how language access should be provided in telemedicine,” Rivers added. “ALC member companies have extensive, real-world experience and lessons learned that can be brought to HHS. We have the opportunity to help shape the marketplace for years to come.”

ALC will coordinate member input and real-world examples to support the consultative process and help ensure the resulting guidance is practical, effective, and grounded in proven approaches to language access across telehealth platforms and digital health systems.

About ALC:

The Association of Language Companies (ALC) is the national trade association for interpreting, translation, localization, language education, and language service providers serving the U.S. market. The industry supports more than \$30B in annual economic impact and a workforce of more than 60,000 linguists, interpreters, and language professionals nationwide. ALC strengthens the industry through advocacy, research, and collaboration, promoting high-quality, accessible language services across critical sectors.

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