



2010 IMIA CONFERENCE REPORT

Over 500 Convene at the 2010 International Medical Interpreter Association Conference

This year 521 interpreters and other stakeholders participated in the conference hosted by the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA) held September 3-5, 2010 at the Harvard Medical School Conference Center in Boston. This was quite impressive for an event held on Labor Day weekend. Forty eight workshops were presented by nationally and internationally recognized experts in addition to many other plenary presentations, meetings, and panels. "There was something for everyone," said IMIA Vice President Anita Coelho Diabate, "including many skills building workshops."

The theme of this year's event was Ensuring Patient Safety for Language Minority Patients. The keynote welcome speaker, Jordan Coriza, Communications Director, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, presented on the first public multilingual state radio broadcast campaign to inform patients about their rights to a medical interpreter.

Participants heard the public service announcements in several languages. The IMIA has been committed to client education and initiated this in 2007 with its "Medical interpreters save lives in many languages" campaign. The bumper stickers with this headline have been extremely popular in the field.

An important plenary session included the National Certification Plenary Panel where several of the conference participants were publicly awarded their Certified Medical Interpreter (CMI) credentials. The session concluded with a compelling video montage of a remote speech by keynote speaker Lou Provenzano, COO of Language Line Services, outlining what we have achieved and the challenges ahead.

The Panel on Patient Safety was quite impactful as participants heard from all perspectives. Most noteworthy was the warning Bruce Adelson, Esq. and Title VI Consultant gave to interpreters about their responsibility to Title VI. Adelson states, "It is vitally important for interpreters, as part of the health care team, to appreciate the risks and liabilities surrounding federally mandated language assistance. They should understand, for example, that permitting or enabling the use of untrained people to interpret can be a slam dunk example of illegal discrimination." A National Advocacy for Medical Interpreters panel spoke about the experiences of presenting our interests to Congress in Washington DC where we need more interpreters to participate and join the National Interpreter Advocacy Forum. There was a packed Annual Meeting where the 2010 Year in Review and Annual Salary Survey were presented as well as a Year Review Report. Marianela Mañana won the 2010 IMIA Distinction in Education Award, and Marta Solis was the recipient of the IMIA 2010 Interpreter of the Year Award. Outgoing IMIA president Izabel Arocha was presented with a Plaque in honor of her extraordinary leadership, and a Scholarship was set up in her name.



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL
INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION
Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

2010 was the first year with a full Friday program, including an 8-hour long "Medical Terminology Boot Camp", a pre-conference workshops on "Language Access and the Law" by David Hunt from Critical Measures, and "Simultaneous Interpreting", by Andrew Clifford, Ph.D. from Glendon College, Toronto, Canada. IMIA Committee and Stakeholder meetings took place on Friday, engaging interpreters to get involved. Izabel Arocha, MEd, CMI, the President of IMIA gave a resounding call for unity in the field - for us all to come together and unite around our common purpose of advocacy and to allow for freedom of expression and a civil discussion of any differences.

The Fifth Annual Medical Interpreter Salary Survey Executive Summary was shared as well as IMIA publications launched at the event. These include a Guide on Working with Medical Interpreters, IMIA Guide on Ethical Conduct, and 10 Reasons to Hire Staff Interpreters.

For those that were not able to attend, please note that all presentations have been posted, and pictures of the event as well.

"The exceeded our expectations in every way. The diversity of this year's program was noticed", says Izabel Arocha, M.Ed., CMI, President of the IMIA. "We are already making plans for next year's conference which will mark the organization's 25th Anniversary." Mark the date: September 30-October 2, 2011, Boston Massachusetts!

About the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA)

The IMIA is an umbrella association that promotes all standards and best practices in the profession of medical interpreting. As an international trade association of medical interpreters, it is governed by and represents practicing medical interpreters as the ultimate experts in medical interpreting. It is also the only national trade association of medical interpreters in the US, and is an official active member of FIT, the Federation of Interpreters and Translators, an international organization comprised of trade associations of interpreters and translators worldwide. IMIA developed the first code of ethics, standards, annual conference, and certification for medical interpreters and continues to be a pioneer in the field with its recent work to develop the first Interpreter Educators Code of Ethics, and a National Education Registry. It's most current work involves developing an accreditation process for medical interpreter training programs and establishing minimum qualifications for medical interpreter instructors.