

## **International Medical Interpreting Conference Unites Over 450 Medical Interpreters and Advocates for Language Access**

Guadalupe Pacheco, just-retired Senior Health Advisor to the Director Office of Minority Health Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the keynote speaker for the conference, reflected, "The 2013 International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA) Conference provided a forum to hear national and international perspectives on the emerging practices of providing quality interpretation services to a growing global village." Scott Klein, President and COO of Language Line Solutions, gave a poignant keynote industry speech in the afternoon. This year the IMIA had an unprecedented number of international attendees, such as a delegation of 20 from Belgium, 5 from Japan and attendees from many other countries, too many to list. The number of sponsors and hospitals that sponsored interpreters was also unprecedented.

This IMIA-led three-day event has expanded. This was the first time it took place outside of its Boston, US headquarters. The IMIA Board decided to bring the event to Miami Beach, Florida. "It was important to take the conference out of Boston to bring it to interpreters in other areas", said Izabel S. Arocha, M.Ed., CMI-Spanish, Executive Director of IMIA. "Miami Beach seemed like a great place to start, and we exceeded our expectations in attendance. It also allowed us to collaborate with the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida (ATIF) and the Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (FRID). We will be announcing the next city very soon, and it seems we might have to extend to four days in 2014, to accommodate all the varied activities taking place at this event."

"Florida is a state that is in constant motion and is more diverse than people think due to international tourism, medical tourism, and new residents from all over the world. There is a need for medical interpreters in many more languages, in addition to Spanish. We were happy to work in collaboration with IMIA to make this event a success," said Gio Lester, President of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida (ATIF). The theme of the conference was *Specialized Interpreting-Getting Beyond the Basics: Exploring Quality Interpreting for Multiple Specialties* reflecting on the in-depth level of skills and knowledge asked of interpreters working in the healthcare field. There were several important panel discussions such as Service Quality Certification Accreditation of Interpreter Service Provider Organizations, both for profit and not for profit, including Hospital Interpreter Departments who offer interpreting services. Another panel showcased the work of the National Interpreter Association Coalition, a coalition of eight national interpreting associations. And last, the strong professional identity of medical interpreters was discussed by a panel, exploring the gray zones interpreters face between medicine and language and between generalist and specialist practitioners. All of this was topped off by three boot camps and fifty-six very interesting workshops for interpreters, from *Demystifying Simultaneous Interpreting* to *New Trends in the Provision of VRI Services*.

### **About IMIA**

The International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA) is an umbrella association that promotes all standards and best practices in the field of medical interpreting. As an international non-profit organization of medical interpreters, it represents over 2,100 practicing medical interpreters as the ultimate experts in medical interpreting and as the best option for equitable care for minority language patients around the world, promoting language access as a human right. The organization has over 10 international chapters outside the US. The IMIA is recognized as the standard setting organization for the profession, having set the first code of ethics, standards of practice, code for trainers, and now accreditation for training organizations. The IMIA contains the only free international registry of medical interpreters, where they can be found by language, state, or country. Interpreters do NOT have to be members to list their services in the IMIA directory.