



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL
INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION
Leading the advancement of professional interpreters



Interpreter Symposium to Increase Awareness about Need for Medical Interpreters

Organized by the IMIA and hosted by the University of Language Mediation

November 9, 2011, Palermo – Italy. The IMIA Italy Chapter Symposium will take place on Monday November 28-29 hosted by the University of Language Mediation (www.mediatorelinguistico.it), in Palermo, Italy. Welcome Remarks will be made by Maurizio Di Fresco, ISMETT International Patient Services Coordinator and the IMIA Italy Chapter Representative, and by a representative of the Regional Government of Sicily. After the morning session at the University of Language Mediation, in the afternoon of the 28th IMIA presenters will also go to ISMETT to present to providers who work with language minority patients.

This is a free public forum to discuss issues related to language access in healthcare in Italy.

“This was a great opportunity for those in Italy who are language access advocates in the medical interpreting field to gather and learn more about these important issues. Most Italians are not aware of the difficulties that many language minority patients face in accessing health care in Italy. There is still much work to be done, so we need to coordinate our efforts and take advantage of this momentum,” stated Maurizio Di Fresco, Chapter Representative. The event has as its main topics discussions on how to ensure language access for language minority patients, how to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate language services, and the risks of miscommunication as a patient safety issue

Lola Bendana President of IMIA, President Multi-Languages Corporation & Vice Chair AILIA, will speak of the professionalization of medical interpreters in North America. *“Medical interpreters have come a long way in their professionalization efforts, and it is important that the public know the risks of miscommunication when working with non professional medical interpreters,”* Bendana pointed out.

Oscar Arocha, MA, Senior Executive at Language Line Services, will be speaking on Language Technologies and how they are assisting in meeting the needs of providers and patients who do not share the same language. Izabel Arocha, M.Ed, CMI, Executive Director of IMIA, and Secretary General of FIT, will speak of the importance on the technical qualifications required to avoid miscommunication. *“Language technologies are being updated and improved at every moment. Hospitals are starting to pay attention at how this technology can help them provide better services to language minority patients.”*

On the 28th the speakers go to ISMETT to speak both on Language Technologies and on and the New Standards from the Joint Commission to take effect January 1, 2012. *“Healthcare organizations seem much more aware of the need to verify interpreter qualifications and comply with TJC new standards on patient provider communication in the US. With international Joint Commission Accreditation, this will also increase this awareness worldwide,”* said Izabel Arocha.

About the International Medical Interpreters Association

The International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA) is an umbrella association that promotes all standards and best practices in the field of medical interpreting. The IMIA mission is to lead the advancement of professional medical interpreters worldwide. As an international trade association of medical interpreters, it represents over 2,000 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. It promotes language access as a human right. It is 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. It is a partner member of AILIA, the Languages Industry Association, headquartered in Canada. IMIA developed the first code of ethics, standards, educational workshops, events, 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 National Education Registry. The IMIA contains the only free international registry of medical interpreters, where they can be found by language, state, or country. Some of the current work involves expanding national and international chapters, developing a Leadership Academy for Language Access, and an Accreditation Council for Medical Interpreter Education. (www.imiaweb.org)

About The University of Language Mediation

The University of Language Mediation of Palermo, *Centro Masterly*, was founded in 1986, and since then it has graduated more than 800 highly skilled professional interpreters and translators. Its courses provide a sound language and cultural background aimed at developing communication skills through translation and interpretation techniques. “*Our institution has always focused on how short the link between studying language mediation and working as a mediator must be*” says the Director of the University Mr. Serra, “*there cannot be qualified interpreters without practice and practice without qualification. This is why the IMIA Symposium here in Palermo is a great chance to show our students that their three-year graduation course leads them directly to work as professional interpreters and that the medical interpreting field needs trained interpreters as they are meant to be*”.

About ISMETT

The *Istituto Mediterraneo per i Trapianti e Terapie ad Alta Specializzazione (ISMETT)* is a joint public-private partnership between the Region of Sicily, through Civico and Cervello hospitals in Palermo, and UPMC, an integrated global health enterprise headquartered in Pittsburgh, USA, and one of the leading nonprofit health systems in the United States. The partnership has brought together resources, intellectual capital, and advanced technologies to offer state-of-the-art treatment. Over the past decade, ISMETT has become one of the leading organ transplant centers in Europe and a major referral center for other Mediterranean countries. More than 1,000 transplant procedures have been performed at ISMETT with outstanding clinical results. ISMETT's one-year survival rate for liver transplant recipients is the highest in Italy. Due to its particular structure, which includes Italian and American Institutions, ISMETT is a bilingual facility, where Italian and English are both used in the clinical practice.