



**INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL  
INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION**  
Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

**MAY eNews**

**CALL FOR PAPERS due May 24<sup>th</sup> so act now!  
2007 IMIA Conference October 5-8 –  
Exhibitor/Sponsor Packets now also Available**

In just five months, the IMIA will again host its annual conference. For our call for presenters information, or to access our Call for Papers, visit <http://www.mmia.org/conferences/callforpresenters.asp>. Please see the list of suggested presentation topics. We ask for your suggestions on presentations that encourage collaborations among interpreters and providers. For exhibitor and sponsor packets please go to the home page at [www.mmia.org](http://www.mmia.org) and see the link on the conference section of the latest news. The reason why the presentation deadline is so soon is so that we can be ready for registrations earlier this year. This is not a conference to miss, as it will be like no other. Stay tuned. Any suggestions for the Conference Committee should be sent to Christopher Robinson at [crobin@bu.edu](mailto:crobin@bu.edu)

**First National Medical Interpreter Certification  
Forum Meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup>**

This historic event took place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This forum was a “first”. It was inspiring to have an open meeting with different stakeholders from many parts of country gathered in the birthplace of medical interpreting to start a national dialogue of stakeholders on interpreter certification! Participants of different nationalities traveled from as far as Australia to attend the forum. Presenters included our very own Jane Kontrimas, IMIA Certification Committee Chairperson, with a great presentation on the 2003 pilot project collaboration between the MMIA, NCIHC and CHIA. Other highlights included presentations by Holly Mickelson, a testing professional, and the Australian model of national certification that has existed for over 30 years and has undergone recent modernization. The preliminary results to the national survey were revealing of what interpreters think about all this. The afternoon included roundtable discussions of questions related to

national certification, and the debriefing session was most informing. There was general consensus that the participants want to meet again to continue this dialogue. For more information visit [www.nmicf.org](http://www.nmicf.org), where proceedings and post event information will soon be posted, or to take the National Medical Interpreter Certification Forum preliminary survey, so to <http://www.SurveyShare.com/survey/take/?sid=52350>

**Critical Link Conference in Sydney Australia**

The conference was a great success and the number of presentations was quite impressive. Other than the pre-conference events, all presentations were just 30 minutes long, and each slot required attendees to pick from one of five concurrent sessions. To read about the conference, visit <http://www.criticallink2007.com> The IMIA had a strong presence at Critical Link, with Izabel Arocha as a presenter and Lulu Sanchez in attendance. The IMIA was one of the few non-profit sponsors at the conference and participated in a grand way by announcing at the first meeting of the conference its move to “go international”. Interpreters from all over the world expressed support for the IMIA. Stay tuned for the location of the 2010 Critical Link Conference.

**Other Upcoming Conferences**

**NETA’s 11th Annual Conference**

May 5, 2007  
Marlborough, MA  
[www.netaweb.org](http://www.netaweb.org)

**Paving the Way to Health Care Access**

May 18, 2007  
8:30am – 4:30pm  
The Beechwood Hotel  
Worcester, MA  
Janet Culpepper 508-856-4850

**Central Mass IMIA Regional Meeting**

May 18, 2007  
4:30am – 6:30pm  
The Beechwood Hotel  
Worcester, MA  
You can join this event by open call - For info email [mmiaml@aol.com](mailto:mmiaml@aol.com)

## **ATA Medical Division (MD)**

1st Mid-Year Medical Division Conference  
Cleveland, OH  
May 31 - June 3, 2007  
<http://www.ata-divisions.org/MD/2007/>

## **SEMIA (South Eastern Medical Interpreters Association)**

Working in Diverse Communities  
Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, May 30-31, 2007  
[juan.gutierrez@wku.edu](mailto:juan.gutierrez@wku.edu)

To add your events to the calendar of events please email [mmiaml@aol.com](mailto:mmiaml@aol.com)  
To see the IMIA new Calendar of Events page, which will be continuously updated, please go to <http://www.mmia.org/join/calendarofevents.asp>  
Note - This is the last time events are on the eNews. A link to the calendar page will be provided in future eNews instead.

## **Have You Missed an eNews?**

If you did not receive an eNews or did not have the time to read one of our monthly eNews, you should know that past editions are posted at <http://www.mmia.org/members/enews.asp>. Feel free to distribute the eNews to any colleagues who might not be acquainted with the IMIA. While you may not have time to read every new report or go to every conference, it is good to know that the IMIA is committed to keeping you in synch with the profession through monthly eNews highlights. Suggestions for the eNews can be sent to Marzena at [mmiaml@aol.com](mailto:mmiaml@aol.com)

## **New Corporate Directory Page**

We continuously strive to work together with those who train or employ professional medical interpreters. One of the best ways for corporations or non-profit organizations to support the professional medical interpreters is to simply join us in our efforts. How else will they know what professional interpreters are doing to advance our cause for recognition as bona fide professionals? How else will we all collaborate together for the cause of equal access to professional interpretation services? We are pleased to announce that we have posted a new corporate directory page. The corporate members listed on this page are the organizations we consider to support our work in a

more, shall we say, 'concrete' way. These corporations, whether for-profit or non-profit, are making a commitment to medical interpreters and to the IMIA by joining as corporate members. Help us grow this list by approaching your organization and asking them to join. We take this opportunity to thank corporate members for their support. To view our list of corporate members, visit <http://www.mmia.org/corporate/corporatememberdirectory.asp>

## **Simplified Renewal Process**

Have you let your membership expire? To find out, simply click on "Find Renewal Date" in the "Join Us" section of our website, or visit <http://www.mmia.org/members/getdate.asp>. We have recently instituted a simplified renewal process that does not require you to know your password. This simple form can be viewed at <http://www.mmia.org/renew/> and we hope it will be a helpful tool for our members.

## **Provider Outreach Committee**

This committee is working towards inviting health care providers to join the association and our hope is that you can help us by spreading the word. There are nurses, doctors, and other healthcare professionals who are genuinely interested in language access issues and want to learn more and partake in our work. Please refer any such providers to our Provider Outreach Committee at [mmiaml@aol.com](mailto:mmiaml@aol.com)

## **Overcoming Language Barriers in Health Care: Costs and Benefits of Interpreter Service**

Authors: Elizabeth A. Jacobs, MD, Donald Shepard, PhD; Jose Suaya, MD and Esta-Lee Stone, MS, OTR/L American Journal of Public Health (AJPH) 2004; 94: pages 866-869

-Objectives: We assessed impact of interpreter services on cost and utilization of health services among patients with limited English proficiency.  
-Methods: We measured the change in delivery and cost of care provided to patients enrolled in a health maintenance organization before and after interpreter services were implemented.  
-Results: Compared with English-speaking patients, patients who use the interpreter services received

significantly more recommended preventive services, made more office visits, and had more prescriptions written and filled. The estimated cost of providing of providing interpreter services was \$279 per person

-Conclusions: Providing interpreter services is a financially viable method for enhancing delivery of health care to patients with limited English proficiency.

### **Recent Publications - Evidence of Very Significant Progress in Advocacy for Interpreter Services**

<http://www.healthlaw.org/library.cfm?fa=detail&id=118637&appView=folder>

“Here you can find several recent publications here that are evidence of very significant progress in advocacy for interpreter services. The one that impresses me the most is Language Access in Health Care Statement of Principles: Explanatory Guide. This is the result of a broad coalition of organizations ranging from the Joint Commission, the American Hospital Association, the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems, the Service Employees International Union and many advocacy organizations, which included the NCIHC, CHIA, and IMIA (then MMIA).” Thank you to Loretta Saint-Louis, Ph.D. Director Cambridge Health Alliance, for contributing this segment.

### **The American College of Physicians Survey**

The American College of Physicians just released its national survey of internal medicine physicians regarding language services. It was released at ACP's annual conference in San Diego very recently. Jack Ginsburg, the lead author.

Main findings:

- 65% of internists report having active patients with LEP, comprising approximately 12% of their practice.
- 54% of the physicians in practices treating LEP patients report that their practice encounters such patients at least once a day or a few times a week
- another 27% encounter LEP patients a few times per month

The report is on ACP's website along with the press release which was translated into 15 languages. For

more information, please go to

[http://www.acponline.org/college/pressroom/lang\\_serv.htm](http://www.acponline.org/college/pressroom/lang_serv.htm)

### **Gov Spitzer to Provide \$38 Million for Hospital Language Assistance in New York**

As part of the final 2007 health budget agreed to in recent days by the state legislature and Governor Spitzer, the New York State Department of Health has designated \$38 million over two years to improve the ability of private nonprofit hospitals to communicate with patients who are limited-English-proficient (LEP). This significant new targeted funding came about as a consequence of the hospital communication assistance regulations that the New York Immigration Coalition and our partners fought for, that went into effect across the state on September 13, 2006. Please note that this funding is distinct from the federal Medicaid reimbursement for communication assistance that has been advocated for, and around which legislation has been introduced in the Assembly by Gottfried, Espaillat, Cahill and others, and in the Senate by Sabini. To join our working group on improving communication in the health setting, please contact Jenny Rejeske at [jrejeske@thenyic.org](mailto:jrejeske@thenyic.org), 212-627-2227 x223

### **Book of the Month**

This month, in the spirit of going back to the basics, we'd like to recommend a book that has become a classic in the medical interpreting community. If you haven't already read **“The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down”** by Anne Fadiman, make it a point to do so right away! This book tells the true story of Lia Lee, an infant born to a Hmong refugee family. Lia's doctors determined that she was suffering from a severe case of epilepsy, a misfiring of the brain's neurons. Her parents, however, believed that her seizures were caused by the flight of her soul from her body and called her condition by its Hmong name: *gaug dab peg* ("the spirit catches you and you fall down"). Through her telling of the story, Fadiman communicates the essence of two very different worldviews, and holds out the hope that they might one day be reconciled. This is truly a cultural competency classic—a “must read” for any medical interpreter.

Sincerely, The IMIA Executive Committee