



January eNews

HAPPY 2008 TO ALL IMIA MEMBERS!

May this year bring you wonderful opportunities and new experiences, to help you achieve great success, personally and professionally.

Reflecting on 2007 – A Year of Change for the IMIA

The IMIA highlights some of the events in 2007 that we believe have had an impact and helped shape local, state, national and international policies, thinking and work to promote the medical interpreter profession.

- **January 2007** - the Trainers Circle monthly national conference call is launched. This is the first network of medical interpreter trainers, and serves to support national discussions to promote best practices in interpreter education
- **March 2007** - the MMIA participates in the National Certification Task Force, the first multi-agency public-private collaborative effort for national certification.
- **April 2007** - the MMIA goes international in Australia, and becomes the first international association with a focus on medical interpreting. The IMIA participates in the first international forum of interpreter associations. This results in more international members and speakers at our yearly conference, bringing fresh perspectives of our colleagues from around the world.
- **May 1, 2007** - Language Line hosts the first National Meeting on Medical Interpreter Certification in Boston.
- **June 2007** the IMIA participates in the first National Certification Expert Panel which was organized by Bruce Downing in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- **July 2007** - IMIA presents at conferences in Kentucky and North Carolina.
- **September 2007** - The IMIA publishes the second Annual National Medical Interpreter Salary Survey. The IMIA also participates in a National Expert Panel on Translation Quality in Healthcare, organized by Hablamos Juntos
- **October 2007** - IMIA Conference attracts over 600 participants, and includes the first ever film

showing, medical interpreter job fair, trainer's meeting, corporate member meeting, and interpreter association leader's meeting. This conference had the most international presenters to date, from Australia, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, and Japan.

- **October 2007** - the original Medical Interpreting Standards of Practice document, first published in 1995, is made available in an online version to the general public free of charge.
- **November 2007** – the voting active members vote to accept the revised IMIA Bylaws, ratifying the change of name into an international organization, and the revision/update of the Bylaws to better reflect the organization's current practices.
- **December 2007** - Hablamos Juntos offers the IMIA members the ASTM Interpreting Standards of Practice free of charge – which cost \$41 per copy at www.astm.org.

The IMIA believes that these are just some of the events that have had measurable impact on the health of linguistically diverse patients by focusing on the quality of the medical interpreting services they receive. One of our greatest abilities has been to help create leverage for change as transformation and growth cannot come without change. Usually the exercise of change involves displacing old patterns, and adapting the culture of the organization with new processes is a difficult one. While there will be mistakes along the way, rest assured that we are moving forward, rolling up our sleeves and making the changes that we desperately need to promote medical interpreting as a medical profession. Join us in our efforts by becoming an active member of a committee and making change happen.

MMIA Board Retreat and Meeting

The Board of Directors will have a retreat on January 26 to assess the needs of the organization, and also to reassess, evaluate and develop a short term and long term strategic plan. If you have comments or ideas regarding the strategic goals of the organization, please email the IMIA Secretary at vonessa.costa@gmail.com. Our current strategic goals are on our website, available to our members at <http://www.mmia.org/about/strategicgoals.asp> Stay tuned for a summary of this meeting in the February eNews.

IMIA Conference Updates

Dr. Peter B. Angood is our keynote speaker!

We are honored to announce that **Dr. Peter B. Angood**, MD FRCS(C) FACS FCCM, has accepted our invitation to speak at the 2008 IMIA Conference. He is Vice President & Chief Patient Safety Officer of the Joint Commission & Co-Director of the Joint Commission International Center for Patient Safety. For his bio, please go to: <http://www.mmia.org/uploads/pages/193.doc>

Call for Proposals – Deadline March 15th

The 2008 IMIA Conference is taking shape and the call for proposals is now posted on the website at <http://www.mmia.org/conferences/2008opencall.asp>. We encourage innovative ideas for presentations and activities that support the theme of the year. The theme - *Reducing Health Disparities by Ensuring Language Access to All* – reflects the importance of the right to a competent medical interpreter in all medically related encounters. Language access is a right that is protected by local, state, federal, and even international laws. While the interpreting profession is well established in the business and conference sectors, it is fairly new in the health care sector, and has developed as a response to the enforcement of language access laws and regulatory bodies such as the Office of Minority Health and The Joint Commission.

- **What can I do as an interpreter to ensure language access for my clients?**
- **What are the requirements for my institution?**
- **How do I know if I'm in compliance?**

These are some of the questions we'll explore at this conference. Our desire is to bring different stakeholders together to discuss language access compliance: providers, interpreters, trainers, interpreting managers, hospital administrators, risk managers, attorneys, insurance companies, interpreter agency owners, and others. The deadline for the Call for Proposals is March 15, 2008.

Newly Published Study - Language Proficiency and Adverse Events in U.S. Hospitals

Objective: To examine differences in the characteristics of adverse events between English speaking patients and patients with limited English proficiency in US hospitals. Full study by subscription at <http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/19/2/60>)

HHS and OCR Team Up for "Effective Communication in Hospitals"

This year the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has initiated a program called **"Effective Communication in Hospitals"** specifically targeting patients that do not speak English as their primary language or are hearing impaired. **For more information** about this program go to <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hospitalcommunication.html> "A **Health Care Language Services Implementation Guide**" can be found at <http://www.thinkculturalhealth.org>.

January 25 – 1pm Pacific, 3pm Central, 4pm EST Open Call for Medical Interpreter Trainers – Trainers Circle

Are you an interpreter instructor, trainer or language coach? Join your colleagues in other institutions in our monthly discussions. The main objective of this group is to serve as a support group for interpreter trainers, instructors, educators, and language coaches, and to promote discussions across state borders that will disseminate best practices for professional medical interpreter education. For more information please contact Vonessa.costa@gmail.com To 2008 Trainer's Call Monthly Topics, please go to:

<http://www.mmia.org/education/Trainers.asp> January 25 Topic: Ongoing assessment mechanisms **Corporate Member Meeting - January 29th** **10AM Pac/12PM Central/1PM EST**

Are you an IMIA corporate member? This is the opportunity for you to meet the other IMIA corporate members. This meeting will enable corporate members to network and to discuss what their specific needs are within the organization. Our hope is that corporate members can unite and collaborate to advance medical interpreting! To join this call, please email Marzena Laslie, at mmiaml@aol.com to get the open call information.

"The Linguists" world premieres at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival

We are nothing short of elated to announce that our documentary feature THE LINGUISTS was selected to world premiere in the newly minted "Spectrum: Documentary Spotlight" category at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival. THE LINGUISTS is the first documentary supported by the National Science Foundation to ever make it to Sundance. The trailer is at <http://www.thelinguists.com>. Here's a brief synopsis: It is estimated that of 7,000 languages in the world, half will be gone by the end of this century. THE LINGUISTS follows David Harrison and Gregory Anderson, scientists racing to document languages on the verge of extinction. In Siberia, India, and Bolivia, the linguists' resolve is tested by the very forces silencing languages: institutionalized racism and violent economic unrest. David and Greg's journey takes them deep into the heart of the cultures, knowledge, and communities at risk when a language dies.

IMIA Special Offer – Courtesy of Hablamos Juntos

We are pleased to announce the complimentary offering of the 2007 updated ASTM International: "Standard Guide for Language Interpretation Services". This copyright protected policy is available from ASTM for \$41.00 and Hablamos Juntos has a limited supply for this special distribution at no cost to IMIA members. This guide provides an organized collection of information that may help health care organizations better understand the components of quality language interpretation services and establishes criteria for each component. These criteria define the minimum standard of quality services in the language interpretation industry with reference to distinctive characteristics of specific

settings. The needs analysis identifies a procedure for making an informed choice of interpretation services.

Hablamos Juntos (We Speak Together), funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, helped bring national attention to a long neglected and growing challenge; language barriers in health care. The initiative sheds light on this emerging field that developed in response to federal and state mandates and is often characterized by untested solutions. To ensure quality interpretation occurs, this guide reviews interpreter qualifications, a code of ethics and responsibility guidelines for both patients and providers. To obtain a free copy of the 2007 updated ASTM International: "Standard Guide for Language Interpretation Services" please place your order directly with Hablamos Juntos today at: <http://www.hablamosjuntos.org/astm/register.asp>.

To add, ASTM International also has available the 2006 published, "Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation." This guide provides a framework for agreement on specifications for translation projects. If interested, please go to http://www.astm.org/cgi-bin/SoftCart.exe/DATABASE.CART/REDLINE_PAGES/F2575.htm?E+mystore to place your order online. We hope you find these materials useful as you work to eliminate the language barrier for limited English speaking patients.

The IMIA thanks Hablamos Juntos for their generosity and for their significant work in promoting language access in healthcare.

Two Reports on Mental Health Interpreting by the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit (VTPU)

Improving the Quality of Mental Health Interpreting in Victoria reports the findings of the first component of a two-phase project being undertaken by the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit (VTPU). The intent of the first component of the project (research into training needs in mental health interpreting) investigates the training and professional development activities that are needed to prepare interpreters for work in mental health settings. On the basis of the findings recommendations are made concerning training and professional development programs that would improve the quality of mental health interpreting in Victoria. The second-phase of the project develops and delivers a brief professional development program for mental health professionals to assist them to work effectively with interpreters. This requires the development of training material and the delivery of training sessions within Area Mental Health Services (AMHS) across the State. Both phases of the initiative, funded by Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (VOMA) and supported by the Mental Health Branch, are aimed at improving the access to, and quality of, mental health interpreting for Victoria's

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. For more information, see

<http://www.mmia.org/resources/mentalhealth.asp>

Guidelines for Working Effectively with Interpreters in Mental Health Settings, also by the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit (VTPU). It is impossible to provide high quality mental health services without excellent communication between mental health staff and clients. Communication is always about negotiation of meaning. It is difficult enough when two people share a language and culture. Difficulties in communication between mental health staff and clients frequently occur, even when they speak the same language. One problem, of course, is that they do not always, in fact, speak the "same language". The same words used by clients and staff members frequently have different meanings to each. A client's understanding of the term "schizophrenia", and its many frequently unexpressed connotations, is not the same as the staff member's understanding of the same term. If their respective meanings are not clarified, there is room for major interpretive error and miscommunication. When staff and clients do not share a common language, and are unfamiliar with each other's cultural assumptions and commitments, the result is mutual incomprehension - a poor basis for mental health practice. Problems in communication are all too common for clients using our services and for staff working in our mental health agencies. The consequences of such poor communication for quality and safety in mental health settings are not known because they have not been systematically investigated. For more information please go to: http://www.mmia.org/uploads/pages/319_2.pdf

New Year, New Job? Interviewing Skills Might come in handy.

Don't be rattled by your next job interview. It's possible to answer any question that comes your way. How? By preparing and knowing how to direct the conversation to the topics you want to cover. To read the article 'How to answer any interview question', by Perri Capell, see http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/interviewing/2006/0530-capell.html?cjpas=home_whatsnew_minor Copyright © 2006 CareerJournal.com. All rights reserved.

AHRQ Releases Toolkits to Help Providers and Patients Implement Safer Health Care Practices

AHRQ released an array of toolkits designed to help doctors, nurses, hospital managers, patients, and others reduce medical errors. The toolkits were developed through AHRQ's Partnerships in Implementing Patient Safety (PIPS) program. The 17 toolkits, developed by AHRQ-funded experts who specialize in patient safety research, are free, publicly available, and can be adapted to most health care settings. The toolkits range from checklists to help reconcile medications when patients are discharged from the hospital to processes to enhance effective communication among

caregivers and with patients to toolkits to help patients taking medications. In addition, the 17 PIPS toolkits correlate with the Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals, which promote system-wide improvements in patient safety. For more information and a complete listing of the 17 toolkits, see <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pips>.

What Happened to the Interpreters in California Who Were on Strike?

In September 2007 we reported on a strike of court interpreters related to working conditions. Unfortunately, the interpreters returned to work after six weeks on strike with no movement from the court. The courts refused to return to the bargaining table. There were dramatic hearings held on the impact of the strike, however, and several legislators are now invested on addressing issues that came up during the strike. There is an editorial Mary Lou Aranguren wrote that was published in a legal paper about this issue. To see it, please go to: <http://www.mmia.org/uploads/pages/320.pdf>

Corporate Member Profile

Cambridge College - The Cambridge College Medical Interpreter Program began as a collaboration between the Cambridge Health Alliance, Neighbors for a Better Community and the college in 2001. At first the program offered certificates in Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole medical interpreting, but as word of the program spread, partners in the field as well as prospective students requested that the college open the program to additional languages. In 2004, Cambridge College introduced the Multilingual Medical Interpreting Program and, subsequently, have graduated students in Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Korean, Albanian, Amharic, French, Greek, Somali, Albanian, and Polish medical interpreting. In February, 2008, Cambridge College will enroll its first cohort of American Sign Language medical interpreters.

In addition to expanding the language offerings, requests were also considered to develop programs that would target special populations in need of interpreting services. In 2005 Cambridge College launched the Human Service Interpreting Program, developing new curricula and internship sites with Commonwealth Corporation in a variety of agencies and organizations. In 2006, it introduced the first advanced medical interpreter training, the Mental Health Interpreting Program, which focuses on simultaneous as well as consecutive interpreting. Currently, Cambridge College has many students who have begun layering certificates by earning the core medical interpreter certificate and then returning to the college to complete the specialization courses in human services or mental health. While this was not part of the original design, the college does consider its ability to cross-train interpreters as a positive development, one which meets the needs of patients and clients and broadens the employment possibilities for graduates.

As the reputation of the Cambridge College Medical Interpreting Program has grown, students and alumni have been asked to meet an increasingly wide variety of interpreting needs in diverse settings. Some of these opportunities have included Mayor Menino's New Bostonian Day; Operation Poseidon, a Cambridge-based mock emergency-preparedness drill; Boston's First Night for Seniors Program; voter registration and election day coverage for the City of Boston; property insurance claims interpretation for the City of Lawrence following a flooding emergency, and many others. The students' willingness to respond to these challenges demonstrates many things: that students from college-based interpreting programs are in demand, that the spirit of volunteerism is alive at the college, that networking and resume enhancing opportunities abound, and, best of all, that individuals attracted to the field of interpreting are realizing their dream of helping others. For more information on the programs, please go to <http://www.cambridgecollege.edu/community/programs.cfm> or contact Diane Lolli at lollid@comcast.net

Articles to Share

Iraq: save an interpreter, sign a petition

12/24/07 - London, UK (Our Campaign): "There is a clear moral obligation to provide asylum for those Iraqis, particularly interpreters, whose work has left them extremely vulnerable to torture and murder. We cannot turn our backs on those who are at risk because of the assistance they gave British forces." Following a review prompted by public pressure, the Government has announced limited plans to offer asylum. How can you help? For more information, please visit: ourcampaign.org.uk/interpreters

Safety for interpreters in the USA

12/24/07 - Oregon, USA (Army Times): Kamal Murad is among a small contingent of Iraqi interpreters who have been able to get the special visas required for them to move to the U.S. They face a careful screening process requiring them to fill out bewildering forms in English and get the signature of an American general or admiral to vouch for them. Faler, a military intelligence officer, helped the Murads through the bureaucracy. For more information, see www.armytimes.com/news/2007/12/ap_interpreterrefuge_071222

Indiana: Need for Interpreters Ever Increasing

12/28/07 - Indiana, USA (Journal Courier): Between 2000 and 2006, Tippecanoe gained 2,794 Hispanic people, compared to 1,250 non-Hispanic whites. In places such as the Tippecanoe Community Health Clinic, the translators

can be invaluable. "It's absolutely essential," Dr. James Livermore said. "It's almost impossible to do a complete job without communication. You need that history to really decide what needs to be done." Cindy Guy, vice president for clinical services at the clinic, said about 30 percent of the patients there are Spanish-speaking. The clinic has one part-time and two full-time medical interpreters. But even that isn't always enough. "It just seems like about every other patient needs an interpreter," Guy said. For more information, see www.jconline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071228/NEWS/712280323/1152/NEWS

Book of the Month

***In a Blink: Awareness, Assessment, and Adapting to Patient Communication Needs*, by Dr. Michael S. Woods**

(Oak Brook, Ill. — December 12, 2007) Inadequate communication is often cited as a factor in poor patient outcomes and adverse events. ***In a Blink: Awareness, Assessment, and Adapting to Patient Communication Needs***, a new book from Joint Commission Resources (JCR) by surgeon and leadership expert Michael S. Woods, M.D., discusses the importance of effective communication—among health care providers, and between health care providers and patients—in patient safety. JCR is a not-for-profit affiliate of The Joint Commission.

Dr. Woods, who is known for his work related to the power of apology and disclosure of health care errors, uses this new book to examine the “DUN” factor — that is, that life is Dynamic, Unpredictable, and Non-linear — and how that affects human communication. ***In a Blink: Awareness, Assessment, and Adapting to Patient Communication Needs*** also explores the various factors in effective communication — gender, culture/ethnicity, literacy, socioeconomics, time/urgency, and personality/behavior — and provides strategies to address these challenges to improve health care provider and patient communication. “Civility in health care begins with effective communication, driven by respect and empathy for the patient. The ability to assess and adapt to situations provides a strong advantage in the quest for quality outcomes and patient care,” says Woods. ***In a Blink: Awareness, Assessment, and Adapting to Patient Communication Needs*** is available for \$35 using order code PSC07SJ. To order, call JCR Customer Service toll-free at 877.223.6866, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT, weekdays, or visit www.jcrinc.com.

What else would you like to see on our news briefs? Please email Marzena Laslie, at imiaml@aol.com with suggestions.