



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL  
INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION  
Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

## April eNews

*“Never one thing and seldom one person can make for a success. It takes a number of them merging into one perfect whole.”*

-Anonymous

## Message from the President

Our goal this year is to raise the energy of the organization and get more and more people involved in what we do and who we are! What was medical interpreting like 20 years ago, and how is it different today? What will the world be like in another 20 years? During this year of 2008, we will explore some of the changes that have taken place in our profession, and postulate on changes we will face in the future.

We will share whatever stories, memories, predictions and pictures that you want to share with us. Here are some ways you can contribute to our *Where is our Profession?*:

1. **Tell a story** - if you have a story - they don't have to be long, just memory snippets, maybe about the way work used to be done, etc.
2. **Make a prediction** - we're not just looking back, but forward too. What predictions do you have for medical interpreters in the future? It might be a prediction on how we practice or about the types of benefits or problems we may encounter.
3. **Share** a moving or humorous story from a medical encounter that influenced you in some way.

Please email any contributions to [imiaml@aol.com](mailto:imiaml@aol.com)

## Conference Update

Much is happening behind the scenes. The abstracts are being reviewed and speakers will be selected and notified in the next two weeks. We are pleased to announce an unexpectedly high amount of proposals were received and that indicates we will have a strong conference.

This is the time to solicit sponsors for the conference, the only way to keep costs down for our members. Last year, for example, the registration fees and the sponsorships did not cover the expenses of the conferences completely. We need this year to be different so we ask that each member send an email to their organization requesting sponsorship interest. For sponsorship information please go to:

<http://www.mmia.org/conferences/Sponsorship.asp>

Registrations will open in April and will allow all to see register for their specific workshops of choice in advance.

If you are interested in helping with the IMIA Conference, either with planning or at the conference itself, we would most appreciate members who want to become more active in the organization. If interested, please email [imiaml@aol.com](mailto:imiaml@aol.com)

## Promoting all the Standards of Practice

Does your organization follow the several Standards of Practice of the profession? While administrators have certain expectations of qualifications, behavior and the roles appropriate for interpreters, as professional interpreters we are bound by the professional standards of the field. Some administrators are not aware of the different standards of practice. In fact, there are interpreters who practice without ever having been introduced to any of the Standards of Practice. This is like driving without a road map. How familiar are you with all the professional Standards of Practice for interpreters? To see them all, please go to <http://www.mmia.org/standards/standards.asp>.

The IMIA will soon start a national awareness campaign on the many Standards of Practice that have been published since 1995. The goal of this campaign is not just to raise awareness of the professional standards of the field, but also to promote adherence, acceptance, and enforcement of these same standards in assessment, training, hiring, and employment practices in the field. At the IMIA conference you will also have the opportunity of participating in a dedicated workshop to each of these standards. Promoting the Standards is the best way to promote the profession.

## National Coalition Effort

The International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA), National Council for Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC), the California Healthcare Interpreters Association (CHIA), and the American Translators Association (ATA) – are pleased to announce the development of the National Coalition for Healthcare Interpreting Certification. The four organizations have released a Request for Applications for stakeholder organizations can apply join the Coalition. The Coalition will hold its initial meeting in late May, with partial support for the meeting provided by The California Endowment.

The Coalition will include 12 - 15 members (IMIA being

one of them) that represent various stakeholder groups.

The Coalition will meet over the course of several years with the goal of developing a program for national certification. This presumably would entail consensus agreement on a testing instrument, program administration, training components, and a plan to secure widespread acceptance of the certification.

IMIA Board members have engaged in regular meetings with representatives of the three other associations since last Spring to develop this effort. These discussions represent a major collaboration between some of the largest non-profit players in the field, which is significant in itself. We now look forward to expanding the list of partners to a full coalition, with the shared goal of taking this difficult and important step toward improving medical interpreting quality. We've attached the Request for Applications at

[http://www.mmia.org/uploads/pages/118\\_3.doc](http://www.mmia.org/uploads/pages/118_3.doc).

Applications are open until April 11, 2008.

### **IMIA Certification Update**

The IMIA Certification Committee has reorganized and is working with the objective of completing the IMIA Certification Process. The IMIA Board decided at the January 26 retreat to move forward with the completion of this long-term project as so much work has already been done. Our hope is that our IMIA work will be useful to the National Coalition's long-term efforts. The new committee members resumed meetings and have since worked on the pre-requisite requirements and have just finished revision the Certification Manual, which had not been revised since the 2003 Pilot. The board approved the pre-requisite requirements presented on March 14<sup>th</sup>, and in the name of transparency the IMIA will continue to communicate updates on the project periodically on eNews. More news coming soon - We welcome feedback or questions at [IMIACertification@gmail.com](mailto:IMIACertification@gmail.com)

### **Interpreter Waiver**

Many hospitals have been asking the IMIA about the use of interpreter waivers. Some hospitals require patients to sign waivers when they refuse or waive their right to work with an interpreter because they prefer to have a family member or friend interpret. While ultimately this is one of their patient rights, few patients are aware of or understand the risks of not having a professional interpreter. This is especially important when a patient is undergoing a procedure, a consent discussion, or making an important decision on treatment. These waivers should be at an adequate literacy level and usually explain the risks of miscommunication in health care and that these can have negative health outcomes or consequences.

Waivers protect the institution against liability issues.

Without a signed waiver, the patient could later state that he/she did not make an informed decision. For a sample waiver, please go to:

<http://www.mmia.org/uploads/pages/337.pdf>

### **Culture Profiles**

Culture Profiles provide short introductions to the cultural background of specific refugee populations. These profiles are developed for refugee service providers and others assisting newcomers to the United States. Each one contains a basic introduction to the people, history, and culture of the group concerned and includes topics such as history, geography, economy, social structure, gender roles, language and literacy, education, religion, art and song, food and dress, festivities, names, and more. See <http://www.cal.org/co/publications/profiles.html>

### **News from Around the World**

#### **Ireland: Irish Medical Organization criticizes translation services**

Dublin, Ireland (Irish Medical Times): Language services provided to general practitioners by the State have been attacked by the Irish Medical Organization (IMO). Speaking in the aftermath of the launch of the Health Service Executive's National Intercultural Health Strategy, Dr Martin Daly said: "The picture has been consistently poor in terms of translation services. There has been a service promised on numerous occasions but it hasn't been delivered very well." For more, see: [www.imt.ie/news/2008/03/gp\\_language\\_service\\_poor.html](http://www.imt.ie/news/2008/03/gp_language_service_poor.html)

#### **Ukraine: Translators unite around improved standards, higher wages Kyiv, Ukraine (Post):**

In recent months, Kyiv's 300-strong corps of professional interpreters and translators gained momentum in organizing their unregulated industry and advocating their interests. Although translators have played a critical role in Ukrainian business, they performed their challenging work like mercenaries, working without any structure, guidelines, or additional career training. For more: [www.kyivpost.com/business/general/28591/](http://www.kyivpost.com/business/general/28591/)

#### **Canada – New Sign Language Interpreter Program**

Alberta, Canada (Globe & Mail): In response to growing national and international demand, the University of Alberta and Lakeland College are launching a new program to train sign language interpreters. The diploma

program, which will begin this fall, will be the first such course in Alberta and the fifth offered at a Canadian postsecondary institution. For more information, go to: [www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20080313.DEAF13/TPStory/National](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20080313.DEAF13/TPStory/National)

### **England - Hospital Translators Cost £30,000**

Lincoln, UK (BBC): Translation services are costing the NHS hospital trust in Lincolnshire thousands of pounds. More than £30,000 has been spent by United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust on translation services in various languages in the past four years. The hospital trust said family members were called upon to translate where necessary in the first instance. For more information: [news.bbc.co.uk/go/rss/-/1/hi/england/lincolnshire/7289408.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/rss/-/1/hi/england/lincolnshire/7289408.stm)

### **News from the United States**

#### **Oregon - Second Annual National Medical Interpreter Certification Forum to be held in Portland, Oregon**

Language Line Services President and COO Louis Provenzano announced today that the City of Portland, Oregon, has been selected as the site for the second annual National Medical Interpreter Certification Forum to be held Thursday, May 1, 2008. The goal of the National Medical Interpreter Certification Forum is to improve and support standardization of the quality of language services in the nation's health care institutions in order to eliminate linguistic and cultural barriers to quality care for patients with limited English proficiency (LEP). Please visit: [biz.yahoo.com/bw/080312/20080312006165.html?v=1](http://biz.yahoo.com/bw/080312/20080312006165.html?v=1)

#### **Alaska - Interpreting Native languages requires more than just words**

Alaska, USA (Arctic Sounder): In 2004, the Alaska Court System conducted a survey that identified a need for qualified language interpreters. For more information please go to: [thearcticsounder.com/news/show/1704](http://thearcticsounder.com/news/show/1704)

#### **Texas - Industry leaders to provide solutions at the 2nd Annual TAHIT Symposium in Dallas**

Texas, USA (PR Log): With soaring health care costs, understaffed hospitals, and an increasingly diverse immigrant population facing the Texas healthcare industry, the Texas Association of Healthcare Interpreters and Translators has invited leading organizations and individuals from across the nation to explore ways to decrease costs and increase access while serving patient populations in languages other than English. Visit:

[www.prlog.org/10054947-industry-leaders-to-provide-solutions-at-the-2nd-annual-tahit-symposium-in-dallas.html](http://www.prlog.org/10054947-industry-leaders-to-provide-solutions-at-the-2nd-annual-tahit-symposium-in-dallas.html)

#### **California - Asian Pacific American community lacks trained medical interpreters**

California, USA (Trojan): An important issue that faces the APA community is the lack of trained medical interpreters, said Marchela Iahdjian, PALS, Visit: [www.dailytrojan.com/news/2008/03/04/News/Apasa.Event.Aims.To.Change.Perceptions-3249609.shtml](http://www.dailytrojan.com/news/2008/03/04/News/Apasa.Event.Aims.To.Change.Perceptions-3249609.shtml)

#### **California – Health Plans have 100 Days**

California Health Plans have 100 days to comply with language requirements of Senate Bill 853 California, USA (Business Wire): The countdown begins today as California managed health care plans have just 100 days before the state deadline to file amendments to their quality assurance programs providing written language assistance program policies and procedures. This deadline brings millions of health plan enrollees with limited English proficiency (LEP) one step closer to the goal of equal access to health care treatment and services. [www.businesswire.com/news/google/20080324005291/en](http://www.businesswire.com/news/google/20080324005291/en)

#### **Washington – An Interpreter's Story**

Washington, USA (KVN): Diana Wilson interprets for a defendant Monday afternoon in Kittitas County Superior Court. Wilson, an employee of People for People, is contracted by the county to provide translation services at public service areas including the hospital and courts. For more information, please visit: [www.kvnews.com/articles/2008/03/04/news/doc47cdb66401287489076164.txt](http://www.kvnews.com/articles/2008/03/04/news/doc47cdb66401287489076164.txt)

#### **New York - Free Interpreter Phone Service Now Available To New York City Residents & Tourists**

With 36 percent of its population foreign born and a relentless stream of international travelers, New York City's millions of limited English speakers will now find it easier than ever to communicate with consumer and business services thanks to *Your World. Your Language.* just launched in New York. This first-of-its-kind, toll-free, phone-based interpreter service is now available to limited English speaking residents, and foreign business travelers and tourists throughout New York. The service is simultaneously being launched in other major metro areas including Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Philadelphia, and Washington DC to support the millions of immigrant families throughout the region. *Your World.*

*Your Language* can be accessed by calling 1-888-855-0811, and will be available nationwide by the end of 2008.

### **Unnatural Causes**

A PBS documentary titled *Unnatural Causes*. The seven-part series, which examines racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health, provides a deeper exploration of how social conditions affect population health and how some communities are extending lives by improving them. Dr. Alegría will be featured in an episode titled “Becoming American,” scheduled to air locally on WGBH this Thursday, April 3, at 10:30 PM. For more information, visit [www.unnaturalcauses.org](http://www.unnaturalcauses.org).

### **Interpreting the Bottom Line: The Case for Language Services from the C-Suite**

A new issue brief from Speaking Together highlights the role of the chief executive officer and others who oversee clinical care, finances, in meeting the needs of communities that are rapidly becoming more diverse. These executives must carefully weigh resource allocations against the shifting needs of their community, always hoping that the highest-quality, patient-centered care is provided to all patients.

[http://www.speakingtogether.org/media/file/STCEOIB\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.speakingtogether.org/media/file/STCEOIB_FINAL.pdf)

### **IMIA Seeks Telephone Interpreters as Members**

The IMIA is pleased to announce its Telephone Interpreters Outreach Campaign. If you are primarily a telephone interpreter, this is an offer you can't refuse. The IMIA is allowing you to get a free one year membership (a \$50 value) if you apply between now and June 30, 2008. Simply answer that you are primarily a telephone interpreter, as you fill out the application form online at <http://www.mmia.org/join/application.asp>. You can simply ignore the payment section of this process as this is a free membership drive. When your membership is approved, you will get an email from the IMIA stating that your membership has been approved. You will then start receiving monthly newsletters, and many other great benefits. For more information on the IMIA, please go to [www.imiaweb.org](http://www.imiaweb.org)

### **IMIA Provider Outreach Survey**

We are happy to have a contingency of health care providers who have joined our mission to provide professional interpreting services to all patients who need these services. We are hoping to get more members who

can give us the provider perspective, and work collaboratively with us in better serving these patients. The IMIA Provider Outreach Committee is pleased to announce its Providers Outreach Campaign. If you are provider, or know one, please pass this information along to your colleagues.

The IMIA is asking providers who work with interpreters to answer a short survey, found online at <http://www.mmia.org/join/providers.asp> and as a gesture of our gratitude, the IMIA is giving away a FREE 1-year membership (a \$50 value) if you apply between now and June 30, 2008. Simply answer the short survey, and you will be given the option to apply for membership. When your membership is approved, you will get an email from the IMIA stating that your membership has been approved. You will then start receiving monthly newsletters, and many other great benefits. For more information on the IMIA, please go to [www.imiaweb.org](http://www.imiaweb.org). The IMIA will present the results of this important survey at the 2008 IMIA Conference. If you have questions, please contact Anita Diabate at [adiabate@challiance.org](mailto:adiabate@challiance.org) the Provider Outreach Committee Chairperson.

### **Language Portal: A Translation and Interpretation Digital Library**

The Portal is a free, digital library of close to 600 resources relating to the use of language access services in social services and public safety agencies. The Portal includes legal guidelines, service models, master contracts for service providers, hourly translation and interpretation rates for different languages, pay differentials for multilingual staff, and sample translated documents. These documents are searchable by state, language, service area or by keyword. Initial documents within our digital library were obtained through extensive research and through the contributions of practitioners from various agencies and levels of government.

Developed with guidance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Language Access Practitioner's Network and support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy created the Portal to provide “one-stop shopping” for the many local government administrators, policymakers, and others who are looking for ways to provide high-quality and cost-effective translation and interpretation services. [http://www.migrationinformation.org/integration/language\\_portal/](http://www.migrationinformation.org/integration/language_portal/)



## Summary of State Law Requirements Addressing Language Needs in Health Care (March '08)

Prepared by Jane Perkins and Mara Youdelman, National Health Law Program, this summary was just released - an update to the 50 state survey that identified state statutes and regulations related to language access and healthcare. You can find it at

<http://www.healthlaw.org/library/item.174993>. If you want information on individual states, you can access these charts by clicking on the relevant state from this link -- [http://www.healthlaw.org/library/folder.71231-State\\_Activities](http://www.healthlaw.org/library/folder.71231-State_Activities).

## Calendar of Events

Please don't forget to go to our calendar of events to see the great conferences and meetings that are happening around the country and internationally at:

<http://www.mmia.org/events/international.asp> Also please do not forget our monthly Trainer's calls and our bimonthly Corporate member's calls.

## Corporate Profile

### Boston Medical Center

Boston Medical Center (BMC) is a proud corporate member of the IMIA as it has been supporting the efforts of the association since its creation. Raquel Cashman, former Director of the Interpreter Services at Boston City Hospital (predecessor of BMC) was the founder and first president of the organization. The interpreter history at BMC actually goes back over 40 years, when the first two Spanish Medical Interpreters were hired in 1977, under the Department of Medicine, which actually had a state certification process run jointly with MDPH which was later discontinued. As the oldest hospital based interpreter services, this department has great pride in its history, evolution, and the rapid growth in recent years, which has made it the busiest interpreter service in the nation. With over 194,000 requests for services per year, the operational needs are endless. The vast professional interpreter staff of 52 interpreters work with patients from all nations. BMC's interpreter full-time staff include Bosnian, Somali, Polish, Kurdish, Arabic, Amharic, French, Haitian, Portuguese, Cape Verdean, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Albanian, and Russian interpreters.

The service is provided 24/7, with Spanish available in-house on all three shifts including weekends, and other languages on the first two shifts. Additional languages are also covered through on-call/paging services, after hours, weekends and holidays. With only 1/3 of the daily requests booked in advance and 2/3 are "same day"

requests, service delivery in so many languages becomes a complex operation. The administrative staff is comprised of four schedulers, two dispatchers, an ASL/project coordinator, a training coordinator, two evening off-shift coordinator, a supervisor, a manager, and a director, work together to ensure the flow of service. Guest Support Services (all the information desks) reports to the Interpreter Services Department, increasing the level of cultural competency at first points of service.

Technology plays a very important role in providing efficient language access. Having built the first internal video call center in Massachusetts that overflow to an outside video interpreting vendor, we will brake ground into a new service delivery mix. The physicians and patients at BMC that experience video interpreting are very receptive to this new technology. What is important is to understand that video interpreting (VMI) , like telephone interpreting (OPI), are, and will always be, services provided by real live INTERPRETERS. The equipment is just the vessel that takes them to where the encounter is taking place. It is through technology that interpreter services, big and small, will be able to provide all LEP patients greater access to health care, regardless of language or location. BMC's interpreter service is proud to be one of the leaders in the industry. For more information please contact Oscar Arocha, Director at [oscar.arocha@bmc.org](mailto:oscar.arocha@bmc.org)

## Book of the Month

### CQ : Developing Cultural Intelligence at Work by P.Christopher Earley, Soon Ang, Joo-Seng Tan

This book explains to those living and working in another country how to identify and develop their Cultural Intelligence, or CQ. Cultural intelligence is an outsider's natural ability to interpret and respond to unfamiliar cultural signals in an appropriate manner. CQ is distinguished by three core features: the head, or the ability to discover new information about a culture; the heart, or one's motivation and confidence in dealing with a culture; and the body, or the capability to adapt actions and behavior so that they are appropriate in a new culture. A manager with a high CQ can enter into new cultural settings—national, professional, organizational, regional—and immediately understand what is happening and why, confidently interact with people, and engage in the right actions. Filled with real-world examples and case studies, this book explains how to assess one's own skills and improve one's CQ.

According to Earley and Mosakowski, CQ is related to EQ, Emotional Intelligence, but picks up where EQ

leaves off; it is the “seemingly natural ability for an outsider to a culture to interpret someone’s unfamiliar and ambiguous actions or gestures the way that person’s cultural compatriots would”. This might happen across national cultures, such as an American in Mexico or even inside co-cultures, such as in different areas of the U.S.

Available at <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/CQ/P-Christopher-Earley/e/9780804743136/?itm=1>

### **About the IMIA eNews**

The IMIA eNews is our monthly news brief. The purpose and intent of this publication is to advance the medical interpreting profession by providing our members with the latest local, state and international news and reports, as well as provide monthly updates on useful websites, toolkits, and available trainings. We know our members do not have time to read everything that comes across their desks or emails, so we actually take the time to pick out from many sources what we feel is the most updated, relevant, useful and interesting news about the field.

The IMIA eNews is not the typical association newsletter, focused on the organization itself. Our goal is to provide technical value and serve as a clearinghouse of information as stated in our bylaws, and offer an institutional record of what is happening in the field of medical interpretation around the world. Please send suggestions and comments about the eNews to Izabel Arocha at [iarocha@challiance.org](mailto:iarocha@challiance.org)