



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL
INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION
Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

May eNews

“Failure is the halfway mark on the road to success”

-Anonymous

Message from the President

Much is happening in our field to support and ensure national certification becomes a reality. I know medical interpreters realize this will bring recognition to the profession and make it a more attractive profession to those contemplating entering this field. Ultimately the ones who will most benefit from national certification will be linguistically diverse patients, who will be ensured competent and qualified interpreting services regardless of what state they live in.

This month, on May 1, 2008, the 2nd National Medical Interpreter Certification Forum took place. Several of the organizations that had been to the first meeting in Boston in 2007 returned this time to Portland, Oregon, to continue this national conversation on national medical interpreter certification. Presentations were given by:

- Louis F. Provenzano, COO, Language Line
- Martin Conroy – Director, Bureau of Hospitals and Primary Care Services, NY Dept. of Health
- Hungling Fu, Ph.D, Manager, Office of Language Testing and Certification, Washington State Dept. Social and Health Svcs.
- Maria Michalzych, IHP & Jenny Lee-Berry, Oregon’s Office of Multicultural Health
- Izabel Arocha and Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, from the Coordinating Committee of the National Coalition on Health Care Interpreter Certification
- Izabel Arocha, IMIA President
- Catherine Ingold, Director, National Foreign Language Center, Univ. of Maryland
- Janet Erikson Johnson, Certification Manager, Language Line Service.

On the week of May 5th the National Coalition on Health Care Interpreting Certification will announce the organizations that have been accepted into the National Coalition. An email blast will be set out to all members when this happens. The first official meeting of this newly formed Coalition will occur on May 29 and 30, 2008. Our June eNews will present an update of this historic event.

Health Information Translations

This is an Ohio initiative to improve health education for linguistically diverse patients, and has translations in 17 languages for a variety of health topics and even hospital signage in multiple languages. For more, please go to: <http://healthinfotranslations.com/languages.php>

Registration Soon to Open

You will soon be able to register for the 2008 IMIA Conference, this month. While there are so many conferences to choose from, the IMIA remains the one conference that will keep you informed of the latest advancements in the field from all stakeholders. This year we will enable you to register for specific workshops and express your interest in a few extra-workshop activities:

- Pre-conference Title VI Seminar
- Job Fair
- Testing Program
- Register for IMIA Certification
- 1st Annual Providers Meeting
- 2nd Annual Corporate Member Meeting
- 2nd Annual Trainer’s Meeting
- 3rd Annual Consortium of Interpreter Associations’ Mtg

Should Interpreters Sign as Witnesses? What do the Standards say?

The IMIA has been asked this question more than once, from interpreters and managers alike. Often times, interpreters are present when patients are signing a variety of consent forms or health care proxies. Providers occasionally ask the interpreter to sign in the witness line. What is the appropriate action for an interpreter to undertake according to our standards of practice?

We take this opportunity to showcase the importance of understanding all the standards of our profession. How familiar are you with all the professional Standards of Practice surrounding this issue? While the IMIA, CHIA, or NCIHC do not provide an explicit answer to this question, the ASTM Standards do. Clearly stated, on page 8:

(6) Informed Consent—The health-care provider is responsible for obtaining informed consent. The interpreter cannot be asked to obtain informed consent and should not be asked to serve as a witness to the actual signed document. Some patients/guardians from other cultures are unfamiliar with this type of agreement and the health-care provider will need to explain the purpose of the form in detail. When consent is obtained with the

assistance of an interpreter, the participation of the interpreter should be documented.

ASTM Standards, pg. 8

The participation and identification of the interpreter should be documented, so the interpreter can sign the document, but not as a witness, and rather as the medical interpreter as that was the interpreter's role in the interaction. We also recommend that if an interpreter only interprets a provider's summary or oral explanation of the informed consent, then the interpreter should put a note beside his/her signature that states 'interpreted oral summary of provider'. Otherwise it will seem that the interpreter sight translated the whole text on the informed consent, which we know does not always happen.

This section of the ASTM standards alerts that this is an instance where cross cultural mediation might be required of the interpreter. Sometimes the provider is not aware that the resistance or misunderstandings stem not from the information received but from the unfamiliarity of this practice in other healthcare systems. While it is the health care provider's responsibility to explain the purpose of the form in detail, it is the interpreters' responsibility to alert the provider that unfamiliarity with the consent process might be a cultural issue that is a barrier to communication, after confirming this with the patient.

In order to learn more about the ASTM Standards, please go to: <http://www.imiaweb.org/standards/ASTM.asp>

The IMIA just started a national awareness campaign on the many standards of practice that have been published. The goal of this campaign is not just to raise awareness to all the professional standards of the field, but also to promote adherence, acceptance, and enforcement of these same standards in training, hiring, and employment practices in the field. Promoting the standards is the best way to promote the profession. To learn more about all the standards in the field, please go to: <http://www.mmia.org/standards/standards.asp>

Sponsorship Opportunities

If your organization has never sponsored this conference, this year promises to be a conference like no other in terms of the diversity of participants and the importance of the activities to be held. Our goal is to reach over 700 participants with your services or products. Hospitals are also encouraged to exhibit. Sponsorship Packet can be found online at <http://www.mmia.org/uploads/pages/336.pdf>. For more

information please contact Marzena Laslie at imiaml@aol.com

IMIA Needs a Volunteer

The IMIA is looking for a member who is willing to volunteer to get our organization to be able to offer CMEs to providers. This is an important step to attract more providers to join our mission. If you are interested, please contact Anita Coelho Diabate at adiabate@challiance.org.

Are you experiencing problems with our website?

A few of members has experienced issues with the website. Sometimes it entails not knowing that your membership expired and not being able to get into the member only sections of our website. Once your membership expires, you stop receiving emails, job announcements, eNews etc. Please check on our website to see if your membership has expired or to see when it will. It is quite simple, just go to <http://www.imiaweb.org/members/getdate.asp>

The process to join or renew is simple. Just go on the website to the link above and you can either pay online or by mail, or call Marzena Laslie at imiaml@aol.com to do it by phone. Checks do make the approval process take longer, up to a week vs. 1-2 days when payment is done online or by phone. You will know your membership was activated or approved by getting an email from the IMIA letting you know that. Please call us if your membership is not activated within the time frame described above so we can help you gain access to all the valuable Members Only sections of the website.

We foresee that will still continue to have occasional website issues, as many computers now have firewalls or security features that work differently in each computer. Yet we are confident that we have improved our website functionalities, quality and quantity of content. This is certainly in line with our mission of being a clearinghouse of information on medical interpreting.

Again, if you have any problems accessing the member only sections, or other issues with the website, please email Marzena Laslie at imiaml@aol.com She usually responds within 48 hours. If you do not get a response, your email might have blocked her response as junk mail.

Consortium of Interpreter Associations

Have you heard of this group? November 11, 2006 marked the first meeting of some leaders of different interpreter

associations. The purpose and mission of this organization is to provide the leaders of interpreter associations with a forum to discuss issues inherent in leading these associations as a means of promoting medical interpretation nationwide. COIA has been meeting on a monthly basis ever since via conference calls and provides an informal arena for inter-association leadership networking. It is preparing for its 3rd face to face meeting at the 2008 IMIA Conference. If you know leaders of a state association that should participate, please encourage them to make it to this important meeting. Our field is maturing and will be stronger as we unite and collaborate to promote interpreting together in a more united way. The next meeting is May 9 at 9am Pacific/ 11am Central /12 EST. If interested in participating, please email IMIAonline@gmail.com

IRMI Glossary of Insurance and Risk Management Terms available online at no charge

Texas, USA (P&C): International Risk Management Institute, Inc. (IRMI) announced that access to the "Glossary of Insurance and Risk Management" is now available on its public Web site, www.IRMI.com. There is absolutely no cost to access definitions of the 3,000+ insurance terms it contains. Previously, this resource was only available to those who purchased it. For more information, please visit: www.propertyandcasualty.com/content/news/article.asp?docid=%7BF9346298-16B9-4B8C-9705-78DF97F15EC7%7D

IMIA Certification Update

Since the IMIA Certification effort reorganized, it has accomplished much. For specific information, please go to the certification section of our website, which has been expanded to include the languages to be tested, pre-requisites, and more. Please provide us with feedback to the information you find on our website. Our latest work involves preparation to enable active members to register for certification in 2008. Check out the expanded certification section of our website at www.imiaweb.org

Process: Each month the IMIA board approves or not the recommendations of the certification team members. As soon as this happens, the information is posted on the website to elicit feedback from the general membership. This is consistent best practice to ensure a transparent and inclusive process. We welcome feedback or questions at IMIACertification@gmail.com

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Extends Educational Pre-requisite for Certification

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) announced it will be extending the deadline requiring an associate's degree for hearing candidates for certification from June 30, 2008 to June 30, 2009. The one year extension will enable the national office to ensure that the proper procedures are in place to handle and assess alternative pathway requests. (i.e., equivalent alternative criteria allowable in lieu of the educational requirements) *"As we faced the impending deadline for the June 30, 2008 degree requirements, it became evident that more time was needed for the national office to provide potential candidates for certification the necessary information and guidance they need to seek alternative pathways to the degree requirement,"* explained Clay Nettles, RID Executive Director. For more information: http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/News/Degree_Requirement_Extension.pdf

Rhode Island – RIMIA meets again May 8, 2008

RIMIA has been meeting monthly now for over a year. Rhode Island interpreters are organizing themselves to represent their profession in this beautiful state. If you know a Rhode Island interpreter, encourage them to join RIMIA, a chapter organization of IMIA. IMIA members that live in Rhode Island get automatic RIMIA membership and vice versa. Those who join RIMIA are also automatic IMIA members. We thank Rhode Island Hospital and Horton Interpreting Services, our two RIMIA Corporate members for supporting this effort. For more information please go to www.rimia.org The next meeting is set for May 8, 2008 530-830pm at Horton Interpreting, Providence, Rhode Island.

Provider Outreach Survey

The IMIA Provider survey is still underway! As interpreters all of us work with numerous providers. Please send this survey to your provider colleagues as a way to promote and advance our mission. More information can be found at <http://www.imiaweb.org/join/providers.asp>

Telephone Interpreter Outreach

The IMIA continues to invite telephone interpreters to join its ranks with a free IMIA membership. We recognize that the field of telephone interpreting is growing rapidly and want to better understand the needs of telephone interpreters. Please alert your telephone interpreter friends

of this great offer. All they have to do is fill out an IMIA application at <http://www.imiaweb.org/join/application.asp> and indicate that they are a primarily telephonic interpreter and that will get them the free year membership!

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Canada: \$35-million lawsuit alleges incompetent government-appointed court interpreters

Toronto (Globe&Mail): The Ontario Attorney-General will be served today with a \$35-million class-action lawsuit alleging that incompetent government-appointed court interpreters have led to miscarriages of justice and even wrongful convictions. The suit is being brought by Mike Girard and Anthony Moustacalis, who about three years ago represented Avtar Sidhu, a Punjabi-speaking Mississauga man who was charged with several counts of assault causing bodily harm. For more, please visit: www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20080414.BLATCHFORD14/TPStory/National/columnists

Australia: Call for aboriginal healthcare interpreters

Melbourne, Australia (ABC): A Northern Territory Indigenous organization is calling for a major rethink about the way rheumatic heart disease is explained to Aboriginal people. Indigenous Australians have the highest recorded mortality rate from the disease in the world. The Aboriginal Development Resource Services is launching a DVD aiming to convince health workers to use interpreters and stop using medical jargon. More: www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/07/2210128.htm

UK: Royal College of Midwives (RCM) wants female interpreters for battered women

London, UK (Guardian): The RCM wants to ensure that midwives are able to work in partnership with police, local service providers such as refuges and counseling facilities, and other voluntary agencies so that women who disclose abuse during pregnancy can be provided with information about where to get help, along with referral to appropriate agencies if needed. They also want to ensure female interpreters are available for women who don't speak English and that professional interpreters, rather than family members, are used to translate when a pregnant woman sees her midwife. lifeandhealth.guardian.co.uk/women/story/0,,2270135,00.html

New Zealand: Lack of sign interpreter `a denial of rights'

Nelson, New Zealand (Nelson Mail): Basic human rights, including health care, are being denied to deaf people in

Nelson and Marlborough because their health board does not fund a fulltime interpreter, the Deaf Association of New Zealand says. Association president Kim Robinson, who ran for a seat on the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board, said he was actively campaigning for a fulltime New Zealand sign language interpreter for the region. For more information, please visit: www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/nelsonmail/4464684a6510.html

UK: Deaf Centre members claim translation services are poor

Teesside, UK (Gazette): Patients are calling for better hearing services on Teesside. Middlesbrough Deaf Centre members claim translation services at James Cook University Hospital are poor, employees in the audiology department do not have enough deaf awareness and that complaints are not responded to.

For more information, please visit: www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/2008/04/10/deaf-centre-plea-for-extra-help-84229-20745127/

NEWS FROM THE UNITED STATES

Senator Kennedy's bill to make visas immediately available for Iraqi translators and interpreters

Washington, USA (AAP): Senator Kennedy's bipartisan bill would make the visas available immediately to qualified Iraqis who worked for the U.S. military and the U.S. government. Iraqi translators and interpreters who placed their lives, families, and livelihoods at risk to serve on the side of America are eligible for these special visas. For more information, please visit: www.allamericanpatriots.com/48745630_senators-kennedy-biden-release-report-iraqi-refuge

Idaho: Need for interpreters in hospitals is rising

Idaho, USA (KTVB): St. Alphonsus currently employs over 100 interpreters, specializing in 80 languages. Roughly 1,000 non-English speaking patients are seen by health care professionals monthly at St. Al's, but coordinators with the program say that number and the need for interpreters is steadily rising. For more information, please visit: www.ktvb.com/news/localnews/stories/ktvbn-apr0808-hospitalinterpreter.46167e77.html

California: Physician leaders pilot ways to increase patients' access to interpreters

California, USA (Business Wire): Physician leaders have a new prescription for clinics, health systems, and doctors' offices: Take a lesson in cultural proficiency and call me in

the morning, so we can tackle this important work. [...] Council members work to increase language access (including interpreter services), cultural proficiency, and workforce diversity in health care. The elected physician leaders and executive directors of medical specialty and county medical societies and other health organizations have been meeting biannually since 2002 with leaders of health plans and health systems, convened by The California Endowment. For more: www.businesswire.com/news/google/20080408006202/en

RIT Study: Sign Language Interpreters at High Ergonomic Risk; interpreting places greater stress on extremities than industrial activities

New York, USA (AScribe): Sign language interpreting is one of the highest-risk professions for ergonomic injury, according to a new study conducted by Rochester Institute of Technology. The research indicates that interpreting causes more physical stress to the extremities than high-risk tasks conducted in industrial settings, including assembly line work. It also found a direct link between an increase in the mental and cognitive stress of the interpreter and an increase in the risk of musculoskeletal injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.newswire.ascribe.org/cgi-bin/behold.pl?ascribeid=20080416.124953&time=13%2024%20PDT&year=2008&public=0>

Washington budget promises to provide sign language interpreters and real time captioning

Washington, USA (Washington Post): "This fiscal year, we plan to make the District Government more accessible to people with disabilities. We will provide sign language interpreters and real time captioning for meetings with people who are deaf, Braille materials for people who are blind, and assistive technology for employees with various disabilities. By centralizing this funding, DC agencies will be encouraged to hire people with disabilities and include people with disabilities in all programs." For more: blog.washingtonpost.com/dc/2008/03/post_6.html

Survey: Physicians should be incorporating translation services into their health care practices

Arizona, USA (NaturalNews): Researchers at Harvard University surveyed 4,334 people in 2007. Surveyors asked patients questions such as how quickly they were able to schedule appointments and whether their doctor explained details in a manner that was understandable to them. Generally, whites rated their experiences higher than most minorities. The Harvard study also revealed that there are ways that health care providers can improve their

patients' perceptions. One key issue is that of language barriers. Physicians should be incorporating translation services into their health care practices. For more information: www.naturalnews.com/022978.html

Nebraska to create a Medical Reserve Corps

Nebraska, USA (Independent): When natural or manmade disasters hit, medical facilities can quickly become overwhelmed. To prepare Central Nebraska for times of disaster, representatives of the Tri-Cities Medical Response System are calling for volunteers to help create a Medical Reserve Corps. There's also a need for volunteers, such as interpreters, chaplains, office workers and legal advisers. For more information:

www.theindependent.com/stories/04162008/new_reserve16.shtml

Alaska: Launch of Language Interpreter Center

Alaska, USA (ADN): For years, Alaska Native language speakers have relied on family and friends to help them with bureaucratic red tape, medical appointments, voting and even just getting a driver's license. [...] Now, the Language Interpreter Center, a nonprofit organization under the Alaska Immigration Justice Project, is setting up a system that will link trained interpreters to those in need of their services. The center will not only provide interpreters but will also train qualified candidates so they can meet the communities' needs. For more information:

www.adn.com/news/alaska/story/354347.html

New York Report: Language Help Better For Patients At NYC Hospitals

The New York Immigration Coalition and other groups released a report this week on the availability of language assistance at city hospitals for non-English-speaking patients _ a vexing problem in a city where roughly 2 million people speak little or no English. The report says that such help at hospitals seems to have improved since 2006, when state health officials began regulating communication between hospitals and their non-English-speaking patients, but more still needs to be done, particularly regarding languages such as Korean, Haitian Creole, Russian, Arabic and Bengali. For more, go to:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/04/19/ap/national/main4028947.shtml>

US Report: Healthcare organizations must assess their capacity to meet patients' unique cultural and language needs

Washington, USA (Medical News Today): As the face of America continues to change, a research report released today by The Joint Commission, entitled "One Size Does

Not Fit All: Meeting the Health Care Needs of Diverse Populations," urges health care organizations to assess their capacity to meet patients' unique cultural and language needs. In its 2001 report "Crossing the Quality Chasm," the Institute of Medicine identified patient-centered and equitable care as important elements of quality. For more information, please visit: www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/104797.php

Massachusetts: Schools teach children medical translation to help relatives Massachusetts, USA (Boston Channel): Local bilingual children are being called on more and more to translate for parents at doctor's appointments, so one local school is offering a medical translation program for students. NewsCenter 5's Bianca de la Garza reported Brockton High School is just one of two schools in the state offering the medical translations class to students. For more information, please visit: www.thebostonchannel.com/news/15959700/detail.html

The IMIA plans to write a response to the reporter of the particular article above to educate her of the fact that medical interpretation is a complex and intellectual professional activity of great responsibility as patient's health outcomes are dependent in part on the quality of communication between patients and providers.

Corporate Profile

American Bureau of Professional Translators

The American Bureau of Professional Translators (ABPT.com) has been bridging the language gap since 1986. ABPT was founded by Richard Rosenthal, who also founded the Bilingual Education Institute, a 26-year-old nationally accredited language and culture institution. In its 20-plus years of operation, ABPT has obtained respect and admiration for its work in the profession. ABPT has an extensive network of translators, interpreters, and linguists engaged in professional activities ranging from technical translations to world-class conference interpretations. ABPT provided Simultaneous interpretation services and equipment for:

- The 1990 World Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations
- The 1993 Inter-American Petroleum and Gas Conference (English-Spanish)
- The 1993 International Conference on the Health Effects of Low Dose Radiation

After the Chernobyl accident, a major international delegation converged in Houston to discuss its effects. ABPT amassed a team of 12 Russian simultaneous

interpreters to assist, and in this letter we were given the highest praise for our efforts.

-The 1996 World International Airports Summit (English-French-Spanish)

Contact: natalia@abpt.com

Book of the Month

How Language Works, by David Crystal

Steven Pinker meets Bill Bryson in this landmark exploration of language. Crystal offers general readers a personal tour of the intricate workings of language. He moves effortlessly from big subjects like the origins of languages, how children learn to speak, and how conversation works to subtle but revealing points such as how email differs from both speech and writing in important ways, how language reveals a person's social status, and how we decide whether a word is rude or polite.

This is not a book meant to be read as a narrative. The author himself advises that this book should not necessarily be read "from left to right." He compares it to a car manual in which the section on tires can be read independently from the one on lights. The book takes us through the intricacies of spoken, written and signed language. He covers topics like lexicography, grammar, comparative linguistics, with meaty sections on dialects, dyslexia, discourse, multilingualism and more. Mr. Crystal, who is British, is that rare academic linguist who can discuss language authoritatively without resorting to the polysyllabic jargon that often serves as a wall around that realm of scholarship. To purchase go to: <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/How-Language-Works/David-Crystal/e/9780641904752/?itm=2>

About the IMIA eNews

The IMIA eNews is our monthly new 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 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 to our members.

The IMIA does not endorse all the initiatives, articles, and efforts it makes public. Our goal is to provide technical

value and serve as an institutional record of what is happening in the field of medical interpretation around the world and act as an information clearinghouse, as stated in our bylaws. Please send suggestions and comments about the eNews to Izabel Arocha, IMIA President, at iarocha@challiance.org