



***Neither fire nor wind, birth nor death can
erase our good deeds.***

Buddha

September 2008 eNews

Message from President

Medical interpreting has gained much recognition in recent years and we are finally seeing the fruit of our work in increased media coverage on the issue of language access that reveals a better understanding of what medical interpreting truly entails. There seem to be two views in the public:

- 1) That the term 'medical interpreters' refers to bilingual health care workers who facilitate communication between patients and providers in addition to their primary work
- 2) That the term 'medical interpreters' refers to professional interpreters who specialize in the health care setting and are remunerated for their services

There is an argument to be made that both are true but perhaps we can help promote our profession by addressing specific characteristics of each group.

Bilingual health care workers expected to interpret are also called *dual role interpreters* or *bilingual staff interpreters*. However, when asked what they do they commonly refer to their position of *nurse* or *medical assistant*, and then explain that they also interpret due to the fact that they are bilingual. They might have been trained and even tested, but when asked if they are affiliated with a professional association or if they are familiar with standards of practice and codes of ethics of the profession, they are not quite sure as interpreting is not their main professional role. Is interpretation part of their job descriptions, or do they receive additional compensation for this skill? Are they monitored or do they document their interpreting work?

Some dual role interpreters don't even consider medical interpreting a profession, but more an activity they engage in on an occasional basis. Last, some hospitals do not call them interpreters at all but call them *bilingual staff* or *communication facilitators*. They happen to interpret, but they are not quite 'interpreters'.

Let's look at the other group. These are professional interpreters who have come from rich and diverse backgrounds and lines of work but decide at some stage in their lives that they want to utilize their bilingual skills in the provision of professional interpreting services. They usually have a Bachelor's Degree and invest in continual interpreting education. Some are already in the field of languages, interpretation or translation and decide to specialize in medical interpretation. Most join professional associations and regularly attend conferences and other continuing education opportunities to remain abreast of an ever-changing profession. The more they learn about interpreting, the more they realize how complex the work is and how much more there is to learn. Some who have done 40-60 hour programs to enter the field decide to follow up with a one year college-level certificate program and others continue on to achieve a BA or Masters in Interpretation.

What distinguishes this group is that they are providing professional services and deserve professional rates and recognition. You can be the 'writer' of a report but not a 'professional writer'. You can say that you are a musician, but we all know that is different from saying you are a 'professional musician'. In the same way, you can be the 'interpreter' in a session but not a 'professional interpreter'. Try using the term 'professional' to differentiate yourself from others who interpret as a hobby or as a secondary activity.

Until there is national certification, and even afterwards, the biggest challenge will be to engage the public in understanding that there *is* a difference and it starts by what we call ourselves. For those that have the characteristics mentioned above, rather than simply stating that you are the 'Spanish interpreter' or 'medical interpreter' or 'telephone interpreter', add to your introduction that you are a *professional* interpreter, and the message will come out loud and clear about your qualifications.

Izabel Arocha, IMIA President

WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health

The full report, including executive summaries, backgrounders, stories and multimedia, can be found at: http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/.

Study - Language Disparities and Timely Care for Children in managed Care Medicaid

This study published in the American Journal of Managed Care, explores the relationship between language of parents (among other variables) and timeliness of care. It reiterates the importance of a parent's ability to communicate and identifies that the use of an interpreter results in more timely access. Thank you to Brunilda Torres for bringing up this study.

<http://www.ajmc.com/ArticleAbstractOnly.cfm?Menu=1&ID=10539&AbstractOnly=yes>

Happy International Interpreters Day!

September 30 is International Translators Day. All over the world translators and interpreters celebrate our profession and many hospitals have parties, or educational events to educate the public about this profession. If you are able to write to your editor of your local paper, please remind them that it is International Translators Day on September 30th!

Use of Family and Friends as Interpreters

Office of Civil Rights Policy Guidance of August 2000 states that a hospital that receives federal funds *'may expose itself to liability under Title VI if it requires, suggests, or encourages an LEP' person to use friends, minor children, or family members as interpreters, as this could compromise the effectiveness fo the services. Use of such persons could result in a breach of confidentiality or reluctance on the part of individuals to reveal personal information critical to their situation.'*

Office of Civil Rights Policy Guidance, August 2000

IMIA obtains full FIT Membership

The **International Federation of Translators (FIT)** is a worldwide organization, composed of the national translation organizations from over 60 countries. It represents over 100,000 translators worldwide. FIT has earned the status of an official UNESCO consultative agency (NGO Category A). The acronym FIT comes from the French-language version of the organization's name: *Fédération internationale des traducteurs*. This organization has a conference every three years, and this year it was in Shanghai, China. The IMIA was voted as a full member association of FIT and will be helping organize the next FIT Congress to be held in San Francisco in 2010.

IMIA in China

The IMIA had a booth at the FIT Congress in Shanghai, China, held October 4-8, and Izabel Arocha, IMIA President presented on her Multidisciplinary Competency Model for Interpreters. The conference included interpreters and translators from all over the world and discussed many specialties, including health care. Many associations are engaged in true collaboration in promoting the profession worldwide as a united effort and the IMIA is proud to be a part of that effort.

IMIA in Japan & IMIA Japan Representative

The visit to Japan was of a different nature as the IMIA was invited to speak about the profession and education of medical interpreting and the organization's recent efforts. Izabel Arocha, representing the IMIA, and Oscar Arocha, representing Boston Medical Center, were dignitaries of Gumna Prefecture, which is establishing a public medical interpreting program for its linguistically diverse populations, mostly from Brazil and Peru. Currently most medical interpreters in this prefecture are volunteers. Izabel presented on the profession and mostly on the specialization of medical interpreting, and Oscar presented on the technologies available for language access. Both presented on more than one occasion to different groups in the country. Our Japanese hosts were excited to forge ties with the US. The IMIA was pleased to announce that Kazumi Takesako, IMIA member and pioneer in Japan in the field of medical interpreting, had been appointed our IMIA Japan Representative.

Resources for Interpreters

Glossary of Medical Organization Abbreviations

Sometimes it is the abbreviations that are the most difficult to translate and because of it many translators simply leave them in the source language. When a document doesn't include the full name of the organization, what is the translator to do? Leave the abbreviation in English, do terminology research to find out if there is a different abbreviation in the target language, or simply list out the name in both languages? This site is a must for a medical translator's glossary list: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_abbreviations_for_medical_organisations_and_personnel

The Joint Commission to Develop Hospital Standards for Culturally Competent Patient-Centered Care Commonwealth Fund grant to support initiative

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – August 25, 2008) A new grant from The Commonwealth Fund will be used by

The Joint Commission to revise and develop accreditation standards for culturally competent patient-centered care in hospitals across America. For more information, see http://www.jointcommission.org/PatientSafety/HLC/HLC_Develop_Culturally_Compentent_Pt_Centered_Stds.htm

IMIA Conference Right Around the Corner!

New Afternoon Pre-Conference Workshop!

Our program has been expanding and we have added another pre-conference event. On October 10th we will host an afternoon pre-conference workshop specifically designed for health care access managers who wish to learn more about standards and tools related to translation. For information or to register, see http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/193_4.pdf

Hospital Tours!

There is still time to sign up for a tour of one of our local hospitals. We are happy to see conferences adopting the 'tour of hospitals' feature as a must for conference participants who want to learn about the language access health systems active in the area. For more:

<http://www.imiaweb.org/conferences/tours08.asp>

Job Fair

This is an exciting opportunity for all conference attendees. You can participate as an employer or as a candidate. Corporate members do not need to be at the conference to post their openings at the Job Fair. For more information, see

<http://www.imiaweb.org/conferences/2008jobfair.asp>

Keynote Speaker Update

On October 11th, we will be honored to have **Winston Wilkinson, Director, HHS Office of Civil Rights** address our conference participants in a keynote luncheon speech on the right to communicate as a basic civil right for access to services.

Winston Wilkinson was appointed by President Bush on December 19, 2005 to serve as Director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR). In this capacity, he provides overall leadership of OCR's mission to promote and ensure that individuals have equal access and opportunity in all HHS funded programs and services, without facing unlawful discrimination. OCR also has responsibility for implementing and enforcing the HIPAA Privacy Rule. A major goal of the Rule is to ensure that individuals' health information is properly protected, while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high quality health care and to protect the public health and well being.

2008 IMIA Conference Testing Program

In 2007, the IMIA offered, for the first time, the opportunity for interpreters to be tested in a pilot project conducted by Fluency Inc. There is no doubt this was a pioneering moment for the field of medical interpreting. The IMIA has since promoted interpreting skills testing as a means to advance the profession and assess your interpreting skills. Please see information on language proficiency testing and interpreting skills testing in the Resources section of our website. An impressive test result can be a great addition to your resume and the IMIA will start including testing credentials in the IMIA national registry of medical interpreters as a way to differentiate more qualified interpreters. Taking an interpreting skills test is also an effective way to prepare for upcoming IMIA Certification.

This year we are bringing in several organizations that will offer testing right at the conference, some of which offer discounts to conference participants. The organizations offering the testing are:

The National Center for Interpretation, The

University of Arizona: Testing available in Spanish.

Questions: Armando Valles

Phone: (520)621-3615

Email: avalles@email.arizona.edu

Language Line University: Testing available in many languages.

Phone: 1-877-351-6636

Email : LLU@languageline.com

Fluency Inc: Testing available in Spanish.

Questions: Phone: 916-473-0100

Email: gofluently@gofluently.com

Disclaimer: The IMIA does not endorse any particular interpreter test product. It supports all testing services that are available directly to interpreters as a means to promote the profession. In the absence of and until medical interpreter certification becomes available; this is the best way for interpreters to qualify their abilities. Interpreters who take these tests and pass them can then submit the results to employers as further proof of eligibility and competency and perhaps forego hospital testing in certain situations.

The 2008 IMIA Salary Survey Closes

In order to better understand the interpreting profession, the IMIA has been collecting aggregate data regarding the current wages and rates of medical interpreters and administrators of medical interpreting services on an

annual basis. We thank all those that responded.

Please be assured that the IMIA Interpreter 2008 Wages and Rates Survey will be published in accordance with federal and state privacy and antitrust laws. It meets all the conditions set forth by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission that apply to compensation surveys. This survey was completely anonymous and strictly confidential. We do not collect personally identifiable information about respondents. At the conference you will be able to see a presentation of this year's results. For previous results, see <http://www.imiaweb.org/about/default.asp>

The Global Advisory Council Holds First Meeting (Press release - September 3, 2008)

As part of its ongoing commitment to improve the quality of medical care provided to limited-English speaking patients, Language Line® University, the globally recognized interpreter training and certification subsidiary of leading language solutions provider Language Line Services, hosted health care and interpreter industry experts from across the globe on **September 15th and 16th, in Monterey, CA**, for the inaugural meeting of the Global Advisory Council (GAC) which was formed in April 2008. The IMIA accepted the invitation and is an organizational member of the GAC.

GAC members, which include healthcare and medical interpreters, hospitals, language access advocates, interpreter associations and other language service providers, will come together to draw a charter for this think tank formed to help guide medical interpreter-related programs and policy initiatives. The GAC will work to develop standardized training and testing guidelines for interpreters working in the medical field.

In addition to the creation of the GAC's charter, mission and 2008-2009 strategic goals, major topics discussed at the September meeting included the development of an international medical interpreter registry and other tools for enhancing the overall profile of the medical interpreting profession. For full press release, see: <http://www.languageonline.com/page/news/98/>

IMIA Certification Update – Registration Imminent

The IMIA Certification Committee is working primarily on the Candidate Manual to be posted soon. The group has been discussing specific language proficiency requirements and also grandfathering questions which will likely come up when certification is ready. We urge

you to go to the certification section of the website to see all the information currently available. We also encourage you to send comments to IMIAcertification@gmail.com so that the IMIA can get the feedback it needs from its members regarding this effort. Our certification process strives to be credible, reliable, and inclusive.

For the moment, the IMIA will have a form that members can obtain at the conference and soon online to know what they need to do to register for certification. A new pre-certification registry will help us gauge how many interpreters are interested in becoming certified at this moment.

National Coalition on Certification (NCC)

The National Coalition on Health Care Interpreter Certification is now also known as NCC. The second meeting of this group took place on **September 20th and 21st in Minneapolis, MN**. Izabel Arocha, President, and Lulu Sanchez, VP represented the IMIA, a founding member of this group (alongside CHIA, NCIHC, and ATA). The IMIA and LLS were asked to give a presentation on their current certification work. Key points from the IMIA presentation included the need for leadership for national unity and collaboration to get the work accomplished. Also mentioned was the expression of support and endorsement by many in the field to the IMIA Certification process, and the concept that IMIA Certification could greatly contribute to the future work of the NCC. LLS shared that it has been providing medical interpreter certification for the past decade in 22 languages and is used in many hospitals across the nation including Kaiser Permanente. LLS also discussed how its commitment to sharing their expertise and willingness to collaborate has been evident in the funding of its May 1st events on National Medical Certification for the past two years.

Discussion ensued about the NCC perhaps becoming a body to develop the 'standards' for a national certification, rather than developing its own test. All agreed that this new model, proposed by Jonathan Levy from CyraCom, was much healthier and inclusive, as reinventing the wheel and trying to substitute other organizations' work simply doesn't work. That was a breath of fresh air for all and a significant moment for the NCC as it attempts to define its role in medical interpreter certification efforts. The next meeting will be mid November by conference call and the national collaborative work will continue.

IMIA Looking for a Corporate Member Liaison

Volunteer responsibilities include:

- 1) Welcomes new members
- 2) Recruits corporate members to become more active in the organization by volunteering for different projects
- 3) Moderates conference call meetings (to occur every 2 months on the last Tuesday of each month (12PM EST, next meetings for 2008 - Sept 30 and Nov 25)
- 4) Facilitates Corporate face to face meetings
- 5) Helps coordinate follow up of ideas that transpire at meetings
- 6) Coordinates general efforts of Corporate Division

If interested please go email IMIAweb@gmail.com

The IMIA Soon to Announce 13 New State Reps

The IMIA Board voted on June 5 to allow members to nominate themselves to become IMIA State Reps. This new position will help the IMIA better serve the members of each state. It also is a strategic move to have a more representative organizational structure in the country and abroad. The new State Representatives has the following roles:

1. act as a point person for all the members of that state
2. help the IMIA board understand the needs of their members in that state
3. work with state organizations to promote the medical interpreting profession

Our IMIA State Rep Initiative was a huge success. We received applications from many highly qualified members who clearly have a passion for this profession. We will be announcing who those reps are at the IMIA Conference and subsequently in the October eNews, and are excited about the opportunities this initiative creates for our organization. The State Reps will have their initial meeting at the IMIA Conference.

10 Killer Job Interview Questions and Answers

(Carole Martin, Interview Coach) Behind every interview question there is a concern or another question. Your job is to process what the interviewer's concern might be. In other words, why is the interviewer asking you this question? Read the entire article at <http://www.translationdirectory.com/articles/article1602.php>

For more information about great job interview skills, go to <http://www.interviewcoach.com/> Last year, we had a conference workshop on interviewing skills, this year we have a workshop on negotiation skills.

From the Golf Course to the Emergency Room, Linguistic Diversity Is Changing the Rules of the Game by Louis F. Provenzano, COO of LLS

Last week's news that the LGPA will require its players to speak English is a subpar, but common, reaction to America's growing linguistic diversity. When it comes to the putting greens and sand traps, an "English only" policy may seem trivial. After all, whether or not English is the official language of women's golf will hardly affect most of us. But in many other settings – particularly medical situations – our approach to a new, multi-lingual America could mean the difference between life and death.

According to census data, over 47 million people in the U.S. speak a language other than English at home, and nearly 23 million have what is called "limited English proficiency." Overall, more than 176 different languages are spoken across the country. Given these dramatic and growing numbers, it is simply unreasonable to think that we can or should homogenize our way of communicating with one another. In fact, not only is it unreasonable, in many situations it is unconstitutional, and worse yet, mortally dangerous.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires any organization receiving federal dollars to provide equal access to services for those with limited English proficiency. Unfortunately, this requirement itself has been largely lost in translation, with different groups interpreting the notion of compliance in different ways.

In the health care arena, the results of this legal confusion can be devastating. While some hospitals provide professional interpreters, others rely on family members, or even janitorial staff, to provide translation. When a patient enters a medical facility, he or she is assured of care provided by a trained and certified medical professional. But the interpreters who must communicate vital technical and personal information between a physician and a non-English speaking patient are not subject to a single industry-wide standard requirement for training, education and evaluation. Their knowledge of medical terminology has not been verified by any regulating authority. As a result, the quality of communication between patient and physician can differ dramatically, and in the case of a diagnosis or treatment decision, one misinterpreted word can have tragic consequences. Studies show that language barriers also

inhibit preventive treatment and care, and the cost of that sad reality is something we all bear.

The only sure way to protect the health and safety of those who speak languages other than English in the U.S. is to codify our country's approach to the issue. To achieve this goal, we need better laws that clarify what kind of language interpretation services should be available to those who are seeking public services. Many states, with California leading the way, have taken the initiative and enacted comprehensive legislation requiring language access services and promoting standards and consistency. But language diversity is a national issue, and it demands a national response.

Those of us who provide language services also need to step up the tee. It's not enough to ask the federal government, or state and local governments, to require and enforce the use of professional language interpretation. We need to improve our own industry by immediately calling for and accepting the creation of national standards and a regulated program of certification.

To continue with the sports references, if the recent Olympics in Beijing have reminded us of anything, it is that we are an integral part of a world that stretches far beyond our boundaries. This realization should encourage the LGPA to reconsider its shortsighted policy, and to look a bit further down the fairway. But more importantly, this action should spur the federal government, and those of us in the language interpretation business, to do more so that we can all speak with one voice, in many tongues.

Instead of inciting debate, amusement or anger with "English only" policies, we should consider the legal and moral benefits of making it easier for those who don't speak English to communicate, in their native languages, with businesses, government agencies, emergency dispatchers, doctors – and yes, even golf fans.

No English? No golf. No joke.

By Renato S. Beninatto, Common Sense Advisory

It sounds like a joke, but it isn't. Last week, the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) announced that it would make it mandatory for players to speak English.

The initiative appears to be aimed at 45 South Korean players — eight of whom rank among the association's 20 top earners. The women were told the policy will require current players to pass an oral test of their English-speaking skills or face suspension from the tour. Sponsors and journalists following the sport are unhappy

that the South Koreans are winning several tournaments, but they are unable to give those "enlightening" interviews that winners of this action-packed sport are supposed to at the end of a tournament.

The LPGA has 121 players from 26 countries on tour, but the South Koreans are the only ones being targeted. For people used to following more international sports like soccer and Formula 1, the answer would be much simpler: The LPGA should hire professional interpreters to do simultaneous interpreting for these players for a few hundred dollars per event. If you want to keep the example closer to home, look at Major League Baseball. Japanese players have dedicated interpreters to help them before, during, and after their games, as we pointed out in our previous posting [Fair or Not, Japanese Players Have Interpreters and Most Latinos Don't](#).

USA News

Access to a certified interpreter - a universal right

California, USA (LA Opinion): There is a legal obligation to provide an interpreter in specific areas such as criminal cases, however, this doesn't apply in many instances of civil cases where, a litigant must deal with documents, legal declarations and other communications with judges and court staff without understanding English. This is not an ideal system of justice in a state as diverse as ours. The outcome of a legal dispute must be based on the facts and not as a consequence of the lack of language skills of one of the parties. The access to a certified interpreter should be a universal right within our legal system.

For more information, see

www.impre.com/laopinion/opinion/editorial/2008/9/22/court-interpreters-a-right-82508-1.html

2007 audit: Interpretation services for domestic abuse victims "inconsistently available and of poor quality."

California, USA (Sentinel): San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom announced the launching of two pilot projects with support from the S.F.-based Zellerbach Family Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore to improve the bilingual capacity within the City's criminal justice agencies. A 2007 Department of Status Women audit found that interpretation services for domestic abuse victims is "inconsistently available and of poor quality." For more information, please visit:

www.sanfranciscosentinel.com/?p=16477

LACBA Lawyer Referral Service launches Free 24-Hour Interpreting Line to Assist Japanese Communities

In collaboration with the 24/7 call center of the Japanese Assistance Network, Inc., which assists Japanese

residents and travelers worldwide, LACBA's Lawyer Referral and Information Service will reach out to Japanese-speaking nationals who are in need of legal help but are reluctant to approach attorneys because of language and cultural barriers. The launch of this Japanese interpreting line will allow Japanese callers to have access to LRIS-qualified attorneys. For more, go to <http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/080922/clm910.html?.v=3>

Some Very Intriguing Words

To speak another language is to live another life, says C.J. Moore in his "In Other Words: A Language Lovers' Guide to the Most Intriguing Words Around the World". More information provided at www.dailynews.lk/2008/09/24/fea01.asp

International News

Turkey: New online dictionary stresses ease of use, pronunciation

Istanbul, Turkey (Zaman): The Turkish Language Society (TDK) is to launch a new online Turkish dictionary at the 76th Language Festival, to be held on Sept. 26, enabling users to search for words by typing in only the first few letters of the word as well as having the ability to hear the correct pronunciation of words. For more information, see www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=153989&bolum=132

Anger over EU's traveling circus

Strasbourg, France (Herald) - To critics, the European Parliament is the European Union's travelling circus. By some estimates, the to-and-fro costs the 27-member bloc €203 million (\$429 million US) each year, comprising transport bills, payments to freelance interpreters and a fixed allowance to Parliament staff. For more information, read http://www.nzherald.co.nz/government/news/article.cfm?c_id=49&objectid=10533579&ref=rss

U.S. frees Afghan fixer after 10-month detention

Kabul, Afghanistan (Globe&Mail): His excellent language skills and physical fitness made him an ideal candidate when the U.S. Special Forces arrived in southern Afghanistan looking for translators. Mr. Ahmad spent the years after 2001 roaming the country with elite troops, who gave him the nickname Jojo and a rich network of connections in the new regime. He eventually left the military for better pay as a freelance security consultant, and started working full-time as a media translator in 2006, mostly for CTV. To read his story,

visit

www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080922.wafghanfixer22/BNStory/Afghanistan/home

Somalis left lost in substandard translations

Mogadishu, Somalia (Press review) - In this multilingual, interdependent global world, languages serve as the best vehicle in bridging peoples of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, while languages may ease the gap of communication between diverse peoples, they are often prone to misinterpretation that could entail confusion and misunderstanding. A flawed interpretation may not only be misleading but often inexplicable and can be a cause for serious misunderstanding.

www.somalipressreview.com/view.php?articleid=893

Book of the Month

Ethics for Health Care by Catherine Berglund

Ethical considerations permeate all aspects of health care practice. The third edition of Ethics for Health Care encourages students to develop their skills in ethical reasoning, and shows techniques for dealing effectively with contemporary ethics issues faced by health care professionals in the everyday health care setting. The text illustrates the way in which ethics underpin decision making in personal contexts. It then explores how the same standards and ideals can inform professional decision-making in all health care disciplines, from nursing and social work to community, allied and public health. <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Ethics-for-Health-Care/Catherine-Berglund/e/9780195551419/?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/resources. 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 select, from a myriad of sources, and condense it into a summary of the most updated, relevant, useful and interesting news about the field on a monthly basis. The focus is not on being an organizational newsletter but on being an industry news brief on medical interpreting. Please send suggestions and comments about the eNews to Izabel Arocha at iarocha@imiaweb.org