



“The man who rows the boat is too busy to rock the boat.”

Anonymous

November 2008 eNews

Message from President - A Call to Register for Certification

I don't think the majority of interpreters in the field are aware that history is being made in our profession. This will be the first time in history where a multi-state and multi-country effort will take place to register interpreters from all over the world to undertake the written medical interpreter certification exams.

In order to see the requirements for registration please go to
<http://www.imiaweb.org/certification/prerequisites.asp>

It took years of consensus building at a national level to reach the decision to have these specific prerequisite requirements. We want the membership to be assured that experts in the field put much thought into it and consideration to the social consequences of certification were addressed.

For some they might seem low, and to those we point out that these are initial requirements for the first 12 months of the program. The IMIA plans to follow the ASL and other national and international certification models that with time tighten or elevate their requirements to denote requirements that are at a professional level. This does not mean that it will become an elitist process but one that ensures competency, no matter the language.

To others these might seem too high and to that concern we state that it is important that the community at large understand that interpreting is a highly complex activity that requires a minimum level of linguistic and training competency. Allowing bilingual individuals who are not fluent in both languages into the field not only hurts the field but most importantly hurts the interests and safety of the patient when a provider or a patient cannot understand or misunderstands the interpreter.

We believe that these prerequisites are going to set standards worldwide for the medical interpreter profession. Hospital and training organizations will now have some clear guidelines of who to consider hiring or training, as well as how to identify those individuals who do not meet these standards to be trained to do the work of medical interpreting.

While you wait for the email stating that you can go ahead and register, please start collecting the information you need in order to be ready when registration comes. Also start alerting your interpreter colleagues that they should be thinking about getting certified and this will be the first step in order to get certified.

We have been stuck in a rut for a long time with regards to certification because there are still some who are unsure that the country is ready. We are also free to move beyond our old limits, make new choices, and take this new action which will greatly impact the status of the profession worldwide. With certification in place, our paths can't help but wind us forward paving the way for new experiences and recognition.

Respectfully,

Izabel Arocha, IMIA President

The Translator's Charter

(Approved by the Congress at Dubrovnik in 196 and amended in Oslo on July 9, 1994)

For those of you that are not familiar with this charter, there is a specific section that sets guidelines at an international level for interpreter and translator trade associations, sometimes called societies or unions. This is not only for Translation organizations.

Many interpreting organizations abide by the Translator's Charter, including the IMIA. We thought this would be interesting for our members to read to better understand what our role is within the industry of language access in health care. We believe we are performing the functions described here and will continue to work to represent the professional interpreter and his/her interests in larger society.

Section IV - Translators Societies and Unions

25. In common with members of other professions, translators shall enjoy the right to form professional societies or unions.

26. In addition to defending the moral and material interests of translators, these organizations shall have the task of ensuring improvement in standards of translation and of dealing with all other matters concerning translation.

27. They shall exert their influence on public authorities in the preparation and introduction of legal measures and regulations concerning the profession.

28. They shall strive to maintain permanent relations with organizations which are users of translations for the purpose of studying and finding solutions to their common problems.

29. In watching over the quality of all works translated in their countries, they shall keep in touch with cultural organizations, societies of authors, universities, and technical and scientific research institutes.

30. They shall be competent to act as arbiters and experts in all disputes arising between translators and users of translations.

31. They shall have the right to give advice on the training and recruitment of translators, and to co-operate with specialized organizations and universities in the pursuit of these aims.

32. They shall endeavor to collect information of interest to the profession from all sources and to place it at the disposal of translators in the form of libraries, files, journals and bulletins, for which purpose they shall establish theoretical and practical information services, and organize seminars and meetings.

Endorsing a Framework and Preferred Practices for Measuring and Reporting Cultural Competency

The project seeks to endorse a *comprehensive* national framework/core competencies for evaluating cultural competency across all healthcare settings, as well as a minimum set of preferred practices based on the framework. The National Quality Forum (NQF) is pleased to announce that its draft report, National Voluntary Consensus Standards for a Framework and Preferred Practices for Measuring and Reporting Cultural Competency, is now open for public review.

Public comments are due by November 5 at 6 pm

EST. To Download and comment, please go to:

<http://www.qualityforum.org/projects/ongoing/cultural-comp/Comments2/post.asp> (Note: 121 pages)

What key competencies are required of medical interpreters?

In *Medical Interpreting Standards of Practice*, the following are listed as basic competencies for medical interpreters:

Interpretation

Key competencies for an accurate and complete interpretation process include:

1. Introducing self and explaining role.
2. Managing the spatial configuration of patient-provider-interpreter to maximize ease and directness of communication.
3. Maintaining the linguistic register and style of the speaker.
4. Addressing the “comfort needs” of the patient in relation to the interpreter with regard to factors such as age, gender, and other potential areas of discomfort.
5. Selecting appropriate mode of interpretation (consecutive, simultaneous, sight translation; first or third person).
6. Accurately transmitting information between patient and provider.
7. Encouraging direct communication between patient and provider.
8. Ensuring that the listener understands the message.
9. Ensuring that the interpreter understands the message to be transmitted.
10. Managing the flow of communication in order to preserve accuracy and completeness, and to build rapport between provider and patient.
11. Managing the dynamics of the triad.
12. Managing personal internal conflict.
13. Managing conflict between provider and patient.
14. Doing a self-check on accuracy of interpretation and correcting own mistakes.
15. Assisting the provider with interview closure activities.
16. Ensuring that concerns raised during or after an interview are addressed and referred to the appropriate resources.
17. Completing appropriate documentation of the interpreter’s work.
18. Following up (outside the triadic encounter), as necessary.

Cultural Interface

Key competencies in understanding underlying, culturally based beliefs, values and assumptions include:

1. Using culturally appropriate behavior.
2. Recognizing and addressing instances that require intercultural inquiry to ensure accurate and complete understanding.

Ethical Behavior

Key competencies in ensuring ethical behavior in interpreter-assisted medical encounters include:

1. Maintaining confidentiality.
2. Interpreting accurately and completely.
3. Maintaining impartiality.
4. Respecting patient's privacy.
5. Maintaining professional distance.
6. Maintaining professional integrity.
7. Dealing with discrimination.

For the complete standards, please go to:

<http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/102.pdf>

How relevant are these competencies to your work as an interpreter? Please send us feedback at

IMIACertification@gmail.com

Next month we will include useful information about other published standards of practice.

IMIA in Lisbon

The IMIA presented at the International Translation Conference on Health Sciences in Lisbon, Portugal. Izabel Arocha was pleased with the positive reception to its Medical Interpreter Certification Program Presentation. While medical interpreting is not a remunerated field in Portugal, several professional interpreters in the audience indicated occasionally interpreting in medical settings. They indicated interest in registering for certification as soon as it becomes available.

Trainers Update (Code of Ethics)

The IMIA has been working since August on the first Code of Ethics to ever be developed for Interpreter Trainers. It included developing a draft and then the work of a few trainers in a Trainers Call meeting on August 29 to revise it. Then in September the revised Code of Ethics draft was sent to all the IMIA members who have identified themselves as trainers. (If you did not receive it by mail please go to your profile and check that you are an interpreter trainer). In October the new Code of Ethics draft went to the Board of Directors who will further revise and approve for send off to all IMIA members for a final review process within the organization before a vote is requested from the members. Very soon you will see this document which will be very useful to trainers and training programs alike around the country.

IMIA Elections Update

The nominations committee decided to extend the nominations process from Nov 2 to noon time November 9, so there is still time to make a decision to join the organization's board and make an impact in the profession. The next two years will be very exciting years for the organization and if you are still considering whether to run, this is your chance. Go to <http://www.imiaweb.org/members/elections2008.asp> for more details about the nominations process and to see job descriptions of the board positions you can run for.

IMIA Salary Survey Update

The 2008 IMIA Salary Survey Raw Results Link

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. You are now able to see the raw results of the 2008 Salary Survey as well, at

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=1aOw3oM8t515vDvHV8kLBM4TtKCfZbNkflxrNqzhPoU_3d

You can filter the results by state or other variables and draw your own conclusions. Please spread the word about the interpreter salary survey. We have seen coordinators and interpreters negotiate higher rates by showing the national trends. These salary surveys also show the difference between pay granted to ASL interpreters in comparison to spoken language interpreters.

USA News

Roundtable Discussion Looks at Patient Safety Through the Lens of Language and Culture

(Business Wire): "Patient Safety in Any Language", the first in a series of roundtable discussions on language access in healthcare settings, is now available via podcast at www.languageine.com/patientsafety. This educational forum is a collaboration of the International Medical Interpreters Association, The Joint Commission, Grady Health System of Atlanta, Ga., and Language Line® University. For more information: www.google.com/url?sa=X&q=www.businesswire.com/news/google/20081023005337/en&ct=ga&cd=cwAT4K_PN74&usg=AFQjCNH-Lg7lBJ1ezmScYwU-s9Ka9Pd7_g

"Online test" for interpreters in the medical field

Oregon, USA (KGW): Avant Assessment recently entered a new market. The company launched an online test for interpreters in the medical field at a professional

conference for interpreters in Boston. "We think there are huge opportunities as interest in foreign language grows," Bong said. "We haven't even scratched the surface of the international opportunities out there." With increased emphasis being placed on foreign language instruction in the United States to improve national security and global economic strength, Avant Assessment is positioned for further growth. For more information, please visit:
www.kgw.com/sharedcontent/APStories/stories/D942MG002.html

Improving interpreter services at local hospitals

Rhode Island, USA (Daily Herald): It seems unlikely that a degree in Portuguese and Brazilian studies might land you in medicine - but that's exactly where Ben Brown '08 MD'12 is today, using his background in languages to improve medical interpreter services at local hospitals. Brown's project and a handful of others are made possible by a grant from Area Health Education Centers, a national organization that provides health care access to underprivileged and vulnerable groups by connecting university science resources, local clinics and health care providers.
www.browndailyherald.com/news/2008/10/28/Metro/Med-Students.Explore.Healthcare.Firsthand-3510138.shtml

Two online interactive college-level courses to train medical interpreters

Arizona, USA (Kaiser): Phoenix's Children's Hospital and Rio Salado College have partnered to develop the Spanish Medical Interpretation curriculum -- two online interactive college-level courses that train bilingual health professionals to become proficient medical interpreters, the Arizona Republic reports. The SPA 205 class is an introduction to Spanish interpretation for medical interpreters and addresses the code of ethics, national standards and medical interpreters' responsibilities. Interpretation for emergency first responders also is included. For more information:
<http://www.azcentral.com/community/ahwatukee/citizen/articles/2008/10/20/20081020tr-riohospital1018.html>

Translation Costs Jump for Emergency 911 Dispatch

Washington, USA (Washington Post): Widespread cell phone use and the need for time-consuming language translation have caused workloads and costs to jump for emergency 911 dispatch centers across the nation at a time when the economic downturn is pinching tax receipts and local and state governments are looking for ways to trim spending. For more information, visit:
www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/25/AR2008102502052.html

Arizona: Hospital develops Spanish Medical Interpretation curriculum

Arizona, USA (Republic): Phoenix's Children's Hospital and Rio Salado College have teamed to develop a program designed to "bridge the gap" in languages. Realizing the need for bilingual speakers who were familiar with the medical field, the hospital developed the Spanish Medical Interpretation curriculum. Last month Rio Salado, which already has an extensive online foreign-language program with courses in Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, French and German, put it online.

For more information, please visit:

www.azcentral.com/community/ahwatukee/citizen/articles/language-grows-in-europe-55578-22053966/2008/10/20/20081020tr-riohospital1018.html

Controversy over Jury Award \$400,000 to Deaf Patient for Denial of Interpreter Services

New York, USA (Point of Law): (A New Jersey Lawsuit) is worthy of larger notice. It describes a jury verdict from Hudson County, for \$400,000, against a physician who treated his patient competently. His failing was to refuse to hire, at his own expense, an interpreter so that he could adequately communicate with his deaf patient. For more information, please visit:
www.pointoflaw.com/archives/2008/10/doctor-held-lia.php

Association of Language Companies' 2008 Industry Survey Reveals Continued Growth and Buying Power Among Language Companies

Virginia, USA (Business Wire): Companies providing translation, interpretation, localization, and other language services continued to show strong growth in 2007 and through mid-2008, despite the economic downturn and increasing competition within the industry. According to the Association of Language Companies' (ALC's) 2008 Industry Survey, conducted among ALC members for the fifth consecutive year, the average language services company reported a 20% increase in revenues over the prior year. The average ALC member's revenues rose a record-setting 35% during that same period. For more information go to
www.marketwatch.com/news/story/association-language-companies-2008-industry/story.aspx?guid=%7B44079430-27F6-464A-903F-479C8C93B3C0%7D&dist=hppr

New York: In Brooklyn, Language Derails a Trial

New York, USA (NY Times): Everything was ready to go in the 21st-floor courtroom in State Supreme Court in Brooklyn. The defendant sat beside his lawyer. The prosecutor clutched her file of complaints and evidence. The judge was on the bench. The jurors — including, for what it's worth, this reporter — waited in their box for

the legal proceedings to unfold. But the trial of Mamadou Bah, charged with stabbing a man in the chest at a Brooklyn restaurant in 2006, came to an abrupt end on Monday. Missing: one Fula interpreter. For more: cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/10/21/in-brooklyn-language-barrier-derails-a-trial/

Texas: 3 days with no interpreter

Texas, USA (KVIA): Margarita Amaro is deaf and mute and communicates most effectively through sign language. For three days, she wasn't able to tell doctors at Del Sol Medical Center what was wrong. Denise Amaro, Margarita's daughter, said her mother admitted herself into Del Sol Medical Center on Sunday night. "She made signs showing her chest was hurting. From what I understand, they wrote back and forth a little bit," Denise told ABC-7. For more go to: www.kvia.com/global/story.asp?s=9265856

New York: Refugees strains healthcare services

New York, USA (Democrat & Chronicle): Federal rules require that people on public health insurance who have limited English proficiency have meaningful access to health care — which means translation. Interpreters are a \$200,000 a year expense at Brown Square. In addition to two physician assistants and a nurse practitioner, Bennett's office employs half dozen interpreters, who speak more than 20 languages. For more information, please visit: www.democratandchronicle.com/article/20081030/NEWS01/810300366/1002/NEWS

International News

Canada: Lack of interpreters

Northwest Territories, Canada (NNS): The lack of interpreters and translators in the health and justice system was raised by public meeting attendees in Yellowknife, MLAs told the assembly Tuesday in a reading of the interim report of the Official Languages Act. Yellowknifers weren't the only ones to complain about the lack of adequate training for these interpreters and the need for standardization. Indeed, the same complaint was heard in every public hearing and aboriginal language group meeting the committee held throughout the territory. For more information: nns1.com/northern-news-services/stories/papers/oct22_08brf.html

Translator and Interpreter reputations

London, UK (Shelter Offshore): If you're fluent in a second and preferably third language then you have a very good chance of working overseas as a translator, or better still, an interpreter. Interpreters earn well, translators don't earn quite so well – but both roles are

highly flexible and both careers very transferrable too. If you're good at languages this type of career option could be very appealing to you as it will allow you to focus on something you're naturally gifted at, whilst allowing you to travel and make practical use of your skills and get paid for it! For more information, please visit: www.shelteroffshore.com/index.php/living/more/want-to-work-abroad-6-portable-careers-10122/

Welsh language interpreters pass European Union interpretation test

Brussels, Belgium (Daily post): Nine Welsh language interpreters have passed the European Union interpretation test. The interpreters visited Brussels last month to take the tough test and all were all praised for their skill. They can now take part in demanding translating work during European Union debates where up to 20 languages may be spoken, including Welsh. www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/2008/10/17/welsh-

UK: £250,000 lost in translation by NHS for providing interpreters

London, UK (Daily Mail): The Health Service spends £255,000 a year translating its services into 160 languages, including the Native American tongue. But, like many of the others such as Akan and Cebuano, Cherokee does not have a single registered speaker here. The telephone helpline NHS Direct even provides advice in the invented language Esperanto - even though it is highly unlikely that any of its 1,000 speakers worldwide would not be able to speak a more common language. www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1078677/250-000-lost-translation-NHS-providing-interpreters.html

South Africa: Court interpreter recused

Johannesburg, South Africa (Cape Times): High drama characterised the proceedings of the ongoing trial of Pretoria High Court Judge Nkola Motata at the Johannesburg magistrate's court on Thursday. One court interpreter has recused herself after it was found that some of her translations were incorrect, and prosecutor Zaais van Zyl came under fire after a witness claimed he had coached her. For more information, please visit: www.capetimes.co.za/?fSectionId=271&fArticleId=vn20081017065539126C927672

Book of the Month

Working with Interpreters in Mental Health Care by R. Tribe

Informed by theoretical, research and practical considerations, *Working with Interpreters in Mental Health* helps practitioners to develop better ways of helping service users who need an interpreter.

Combining contributions from a number of different disciplines this book discusses: Interpreters in medical consultations; Issues of language provision in health care services; the application of theoretical frameworks to the work with interpreters and the work of interpreters in a variety of practical settings.

http://intransbooks.com/book_story/0415188792

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.

Please send suggestions and comments about the eNews to Izabel Arocha at iarocha@imiaweb.org