



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL  
INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION  
Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

## IMIA eNews - January 2009



### HAPPY 2009 TO ALL IMIA MEMBERS

*Each new year (day) is a blank chapter (page) in the diary of your life. The secret of success is in turning that diary into the best story you possibly can.*

**Douglas Pagels, Author**



## Letter from the President

**What can we expect in 2009?** There is certainly a wave of global recession that some of us will feel affected by. However, the interpreting field is growing, and doing quite well considering the economy predicted for 2009 (see <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/12/23/2453757.htm> )

Many medical interpreters work primarily as freelancers and as such work for several clients, which means that they are not putting all of their eggs in one basket. Some of these interpreters might actually be hired as full-fledged employees due to the regular hours they work as per diems or due to the essential nature of the work they provide for certain organizations (see report [http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/386\\_3.pdf](http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/386_3.pdf)). For those that are already employed as part-time or full-time employees, their work is ensured as the trend for interpretation services will continue to grow.

Employers will focus on improving productivity and cost-effective practices and quality new measures will emerge for on site and remote interpreting (see current performance improvement measures developed by Speaking Together at <http://www.speakingtogether.com/measures>). Speaking Together has now begun work on performance improvement measures for translation services.

Then there is Certification. Medical interpreters are finally going to have the opportunity to become certified by a not-for-profit international entity, the IMIA, and get the CMI® Credential,

which stands for "Certified Medical Interpreter". Much work is being done at this moment to make this a collaborative endeavor. Interpreters have waited long enough and 2009 is the certainly year for this new specialization to be officially recognized through certification. You will receive an important survey about certification and we ask that you please disseminate it to all your colleagues. This will be the last step prior to opening registration for certification.

In 2009 we intend to promote the medical interpreter profession as never before. The international code of ethics promotion campaign is just one of many activities the IMIA is engaged in to promote the work professional interpreters do. More IMIA Guide publications will be launched in 2009 so that the public becomes more aware of specific subtopics in our field and of the crucial role of effective communication in health care. More importantly, let's promote how 'accurate' and 'competent' interpretation is crucial to such effective communication. The motto for 2009 will certainly be for us to promote that 'qualified' interpreters are the only ones that can guarantee a patient's right to equitable health care access. Interpretation by an 'unqualified' individual can at best give the 'illusion' of language access to all parties involved in the interaction, but that patient is being underserved and possible errors committed (such as interpreting gall bladder as bladder) could incur adverse health effects.

**What were your 2009 resolutions?** For those celebrating New Year's Eve, it has always been a time for looking back to the past, and more importantly, forward to the coming year. It's a time to reflect on the changes we want (or need) to make and resolve to follow through on those changes. Did your New Year resolutions make this top ten list? <http://pittsburgh.about.com/od/holidays/tp/resolutions.htm>

**What can I do to make a difference in 2009?** There are many things you can do. Check out this new page called Act Now at <http://www.imiaweb.org/members/actnow.asp> and start making a difference in promoting language access.

Also, have you thought of how to take your career to another level? Soon we will have a webinar called 'Career Planning 101' that will allow you to think of different ways to enhance your job prospects, your career status and your professional development plans. The IMIA's goal is to help YOU, as your success is the measure of our success.

Sincerely,

Izabel Arocha, M.Ed., President



## US News

### Doctor Ordered to Pay \$400K in Punitive Damages

Amednews.com, Amy Lynn Sorrell. A punitive damages verdict is enough to catch anyone's attention. But a verdict for punitive damages in a disability discrimination case can be a double whammy for physicians.

Since such claims are not covered under traditional medical liability insurance, any judgments would come out of doctors' own pockets. That is exactly what befell New Jersey rheumatologist Robert A. Fogari, MD, when a Hudson County jury in October 2008 unanimously handed down a \$400,000 award against him for allegedly refusing to pay for a sign language interpreter for a patient who is deaf. Half of the award was for punitive damages. For more: <http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2009/01/05/prca0105.htm>

### It's the law: California patients can have an interpreter

California, USA (Sacbee): Millions of Californians with limited English proficiency now have the right to an interpreter from their commercial health and dental plans – made possible by a law aimed at dismantling the language barriers that get in the way of good medicine. For more information, please visit: [www.sacbee.com/capitolandcalifornia/story/1513448.html?mi\\_rss=Capitol%20and%20California](http://www.sacbee.com/capitolandcalifornia/story/1513448.html?mi_rss=Capitol%20and%20California)

### Is texting becoming a language of its own?

Illinois, USA (Daily Tech): With cell phones becoming the primary means of distance communication, text messages and instant messages are becoming almost a new written language of their own, according to University of Tasmania lecturer Nenagh Kemp. For more information, please visit: [www.dailytech.com/Textese+Cell+Phone+Language+Emerges+Can+U+Rd+Ths/article13645.htm](http://www.dailytech.com/Textese+Cell+Phone+Language+Emerges+Can+U+Rd+Ths/article13645.htm)

### A look at hospital troubles across the country

The Associated Press, 27 Dec 2008 Hospitals around the country are struggling to stay afloat amid the recession, although many have had financial problems for years, often blamed on Medicare, Medicaid and other government health programs that don't fully cover the costs of care for millions of patients. For more go to <http://www.cnbc.com/id/28399860/>

### LLS Medical Interpreter Certification Program

Monterey, CA - (December 17, 2008) - Language Line® University, the globally recognized interpreter testing, training and certification division of Language Line Services, and PSI Services LLC, an industry-leading provider of professional testing services, announced a new partnership to expand the development and implementation of its patent-pending national medical interpreter certification for all medical interpreting disciplines, including on-site and remote interpreting. See <http://www.forbes.com/businesswire/feeds/businesswire/2008/12/17/businesswire117967767.html>

### Despite slump, interpreters flourish in American Babel

Reuters (December 23, 2008) Like a growing number of clients - from US law enforcement agencies and the courts to hospitals and financial services firms - the agency reached out to an interpretation service to help make themselves heard through the Babel of an increasingly polyglot world. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/12/23/2453757.htm>

### Texas Bill filed to Establish Interpreter Standards

On November 14, 2008, Texas State Representative Eddie Rodriguez filed House Bill 233, related to the creation of an advisory committee to establish and recommend qualifications for medical translators and interpreters. [http://tahit.us/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/HB00233I.328202950.pdf](http://tahit.us/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/HB00233I.328202950.pdf)



## International News

### Australia: GNWT considers aboriginal language services

Yellowknife, Australia (Northern News Services): Aboriginal language speakers may soon have an easier time accessing government services, as the GNWT has put out a tender to examine creating aboriginal language service windows in Yellowknife and across the NWT. For more information, please visit: [nnsi.com/northern-news-services/stories/papers/dec10\\_08ls.html](http://nnsi.com/northern-news-services/stories/papers/dec10_08ls.html)

### France – Translation Market Research Study

A survey which studies translator and interpreter salaries and practices in France was published. (French only) Go to: [http://www.sft.fr/page.php?P=fo/public/menu/gestion\\_front/index&id=144](http://www.sft.fr/page.php?P=fo/public/menu/gestion_front/index&id=144)



## IMIA News

### IMIA Elections Results

Elections are over and if you have not heard, the voting period closed December 17<sup>th</sup>. As per our Bylaws, all active members received email ballots and the votes show clearly the mandate: to continue the work we have engaged in and finish the projects that are still underway, such as medical interpreter certification, IMIA Guides and more. Please go to the elections page to see the names of the new executive board members for 2009-2011. <http://www.imiaweb.org/members/elections2008.asp>. Please join us in congratulating these industry leaders for their commitment to promoting your professional interests and rights.

### Reflecting on 2008 – A Year of Achievements for IMIA

The IMIA will highlight some of the events in 2008 that we believe have had an impact and helped shape local, state, national and international policies, and thinking to promote the medical interpreter profession. This information will soon be posted in the About Us Section.

Usually the exercise of change involves displacing old patterns and adapting the culture of the organization with new processes and systems. While there will be mistakes along the way, rest assured that we are moving forward, rolling up our sleeves and making the changes that we desperately need to promote medical interpreting as a medical profession. Join us in our efforts by becoming an active member of a committee and making change happen. Send us your ideas to [IMIAweb@gmail.com](mailto:IMIAweb@gmail.com).

### New Year, New Ways

The IMIA wants to make sure that we continue to be innovators in the field of medical interpreting so we welcome ideas and concepts that will help us achieve this. Please email [IMIAweb@gmail.com](mailto:IMIAweb@gmail.com) with your ideas.

**Two or Three Year Renewals** - One new way of doing things refers to our membership fees. From now on members can renew for one year at \$50/year but also have the option for two years at \$90 (\$35/yr) or three years at \$120 (\$40/yr) for two reasons: save money and simplify the number of renewals you have to deal with. We thank Karin Hobrecker for giving us this idea at the 2008 IMIA Conference.

**Sponsoring and Sustaining Corporate Members** - Another innovation is that the IMIA Board voted for our corporate

members to have additional benefits in the two highest categories of corporate membership. Those organizations that join as *Sponsoring Partner* members will receive 25 individual memberships in addition to the benefits listed and *Sustaining Partner* Members will receive 50 individual memberships. To see the full list of corporate benefits:

<http://www.imiaweb.org/members/corporate.asp>

**Job Postings for Non-members now an IMIA service** - Would you like to post a job to 1,600 members, but you are not a corporate member? Now the IMIA can offer this service at a nominal fee of \$100. While members have unlimited job postings per year, non members can post jobs at \$100/posting. Soon you will see this feature on our website.

### International Medical Interpreters Association Publishes Guide to Medical Translations

The publication of a new guide on medical translation was announced today. The IMIA Guide to Medical Translation is the second in a series of guides to be published by the *International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA)*. The publication underwent a peer-review process and is intended to be a short primer on the topic. Hospitals and health care facilities throughout the world struggle to provide patients with translated patient materials. To download Guide go to:

<http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/438.pdf>

To see two other useful publications to medical translation go to our new translation page at

<http://www.imiaweb.org/resources/translation.asp>

### IMIA 2009 Conference Committee Members Sought

The IMIA is looking for 4 or 5 individuals who are interested. To inquire please email [IMIAweb@gmail.com](mailto:IMIAweb@gmail.com) by January 23.

### IMIA Conference Update – Call for Papers

The 2009 IMIA Conference is taking shape and the call for papers will soon be posted on the website. We encourage innovative ideas for presentations and activities that support the theme of the year which is **Global Perspectives on Professional Medical Interpreters**. The theme of the year reflects the importance of a global perspective to the work a competent medical interpreter.

Health access is a right that is protected by local, state, federal, and international laws. While the interpreting profession is well established in the business and conference sectors, it is fairly new in the health care sector as a specialized profession. We will be welcoming professional development presentations as well as

presentations that speak to the work being done by a particular state or country with regards to shaping a professional image of the medical interpreter. If you know of a speaker that you think we should have, please let us know at [IMIAweb@gmail.com](mailto:IMIAweb@gmail.com).

## Certification Update

### The Medical Interpreter Certification and Qualification

**Program** is almost here and the need at this moment is to educate our members and the public at large about the certification process, which includes the pre-requisites, what to expect on the written exams and what to expect in the oral exams. We will continue to strive for certification to become the ultimate standard qualification process for medical interpreters worldwide. Certification will give interpreters the ability to prove their qualifications, to 'qualify' them and most importantly allow for a full reimbursement for our services as vital health professional services, and not as administrative costs.

**qualify** \KWOL-uh-fahy\, *verb*:

1. to make or become fit or competent
2. to give legal power; to make or become legally capable
3. to characterize by attributing some quality to

Webster Dictionary

**Certification Webinars to take place in 2009** - The IMIA will provide periodic webinars in 2009 to the general public to review what the certification process entails. We are also publishing the IMIA Guides so that candidates for the certification process have more standardized materials to study from. Our next IMIA Guide will be on Ethical Behavior, followed by one on Standards of Practice and others on the specific roles of the interpreter.

**IMIA Qualification Program for Minority Languages** - The IMIA is very committed to interpreters and patients who work/speak minority languages. IMIA is now working on the qualification program guidelines for tier 2 and tier 3 languages, following some available international models from Canada and Australia for general and court interpreters.

**Intellectual Property of IMIA Certification Process** - The IMIA registered the copyrights of all the materials related to certification (instrument, candidate's manual, presentations, etc.) and also filed for a patent of its process in 2008. Currently only the IMIA and LLS have copyrighted and patent-pending certification processes related to medical interpreters. That means other organizations (for profit or non profit) will not be able to develop a certification process for medical/health care interpreters, whether national or

statewide. For more information see

<http://www.imiaweb.org/certification/intellectualproperty.asp>

We are experiencing a large number of inquiries about certification from interpreters worldwide and ask for your patience in responding to them. We continue to encourage any feedback you would like to give the IMIA Certification Committee, please email [IMIACertification@gmail.com](mailto:IMIACertification@gmail.com)

## Code of Ethics Global Campaign

The International Medical Interpreters Association, IMIA, announced its intention to disseminate the IMIA Code of Ethics worldwide, and to that end the first code of ethics for medical interpreters has now been translated into eleven languages: Arabic, Chinese (Traditional and Simplified), French, German, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Continental Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

To see press release: <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/Interpreter-Association-IMIA-prnews-13951231.html>

We believe this is a great step in promoting the code of ethics to a larger audience. To see the code translations, go to <http://www.imiaweb.org/code/default.asp>. Please let us know if you are connected to an international association as we have initiated collaborative efforts with several organizations and could use your help.

## Medical Interpreter Trainers – Trainers Circle

Are you an interpreter instructor, trainer or language coach? Join your colleagues in other institutions in our monthly discussions. The main objective of this group is to serve as a support group for interpreter trainers, instructors, educators, and language coaches, and to promote discussions across state borders that will disseminate best practices for professional medical interpreter education. These meetings are always on the last Friday of the month at (9am Pacific 11am Central 12pm EST) This meeting is for IMIA members only and to join please email us at [IMIAweb@gmail.com](mailto:IMIAweb@gmail.com) to get the call-in information.

The topic for the January 30 meeting is

***What can we learn from ASL interpreter training?***

To see the IMIA Trainers Circle Page go to

<http://www.imiaweb.org/education/Trainers.asp>

## Corporate Division Member Meetings

Are you an IMIA corporate member? This is the opportunity for you to meet the other IMIA corporate members. This meeting will



enable corporate members to network and to discuss what their specific needs are within the organization. Our hope is that corporate members can unite and collaborate to advance our mutual goals. To join this call, go to the Corporate meeting page at <http://www.imiaweb.org/corporate/Corpmtgs.asp>  
Next meeting: **Tuesday January 27 9AM Pac/11PM Central/12PM EST**

### IMIA Participates in Refugee Works Event in Baltimore

The IMIA was honored with an invitation to participate at this event, which took place December 15 and brought together professional associations, employers, local, state and federal officials, educators and others to meet with refugee professionals (including interpreters). A member of the IMIA, Maria Radulovic, participated in a roundtable with refugee interpreters at the event. Many refugees do not know about the high demand for the interpreting profession. Help us spread the word, particularly to those fully bilingual and bicultural individuals who speak minority languages and have the potential to be trained as our future medical interpreters.



## News Relevant to Medical Interpreting

### Improving Quality and Achieving Equity: A Guide for Hospital Leaders

The Disparities Solutions Center, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is proud to announce the release of [\*Improving Quality and Achieving Equity: A Guide for Hospital Leaders\*](#). The goals of this *Guide* are to:

- Highlight the evidence for racial and ethnic disparities in health care and provide the rationale for addressing them—with a focus on quality, cost, risk management and accreditation.
- Highlight model practices—hospitals and leaders who are actively engaged in addressing disparities and achieving equity.
- Recommend a set of activities and resources that can help hospital leaders initiate an agenda for action in this area.

To download guide go to

[http://www2.massgeneral.org/disparitiessolutions/z\\_files/DSC%20Leadership%20Guide%2012.18.08.pdf](http://www2.massgeneral.org/disparitiessolutions/z_files/DSC%20Leadership%20Guide%2012.18.08.pdf)

### HHS and OCR "Effective Communication in Hospitals"

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

### Online Tools for Interpreters

**WordFinder** - One Interface for all your terms Books, CDs and the Internet , WordFinder saves you a lot of *time* (and therefore *money*), searching for terms when you translate. The application combines the most extensive search engine with professional dictionaries you select as well as your own glossaries in one simple, elegant user interface. You can select from over 100 dictionary titles in 12 languages. For more go to [www.wordfinder.com](http://www.wordfinder.com)

**Xelerity** agenda is the unique central place for freelance translators to share their agendas and availabilities with their known clients. Many freelancers use Xelerity as a service to their clients and to increase their chances to be selected on projects. There is a new tool on the Internet which allows freelancers to share their availabilities (in terms of dates/volume) with all their known clients. To access this platform, just go to : <http://www.xelerity.com>

### New Year, New Job Reviewing Your Interviewing Skills

We'd like to share a good article on helping you improve in your interviewing skills. "Don't be rattled by your next job interview. It's possible to answer any question that comes your way. How? By preparing and knowing how to direct the conversation to the topics you want to cover. Check out the interactive **Interview-Prep** to get ready for your next big job meeting. To read the article 'How to answer any interview question', by Perri Capell please go to [http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/interviewing/20060530-capell.html?cjpos=home\\_whatsnew\\_minor](http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/interviewing/20060530-capell.html?cjpos=home_whatsnew_minor) Copyright © 2006 CareerJournal.com. All rights reserved.



## IMIA Book of the Month

**Revisiting the Interpreter's Role: A Study of Conference, Court, and Medical Interpreters in Canada, Mexico, and the United States**, By Claudia Angelelli

Through the development of a valid and reliable instrument, this book sets out to study the role that interpreters play in the various settings where they work, i.e. the courts, the hospitals, business meetings, international conferences, and schools. It presents interpreters' perceptions and beliefs about their work as well as statements of their behaviors about their practice. For the first time, the administration and results of a survey administered across languages in Canada, Mexico and the United States offer the reader a glimpse of the interpreters' views in their own words. It also discusses the tension between professional ideology and the reality of interpreters at work. This book has implications for the theory and practice of interpreting across settings.

<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Revisiting-the-Interpreters-Role/Claudia-V-Angelelli/e/9781588115652/?itm=3>

### 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](mailto:iarocha@imiaweb.org)