



## IMIA eNews – September 2009



### “United we stand; divided we fall”

*Aesop*



## Letter from the President

Dear members,

As we continue our work in the area of national certification I have put some thought into the following question: What does it mean to the IMIA to be a leading organization in the field of professionalizing medical interpreting? For some it might mean that we are the best; for others that we are inspiring because of how much we accomplish, whether through publications or our efforts towards national certification.

To be highly accomplished is impressive, but that isn't what leadership is about. True leading organizations are not just high achieving organizations; they also support other organizations around them to achieve, and, in certain cases, to become leaders themselves. In other words, a true leading organization does not create a static group of followers. Rather, it creates an environment in which everyone can develop their potential. It sets an example with its actions, while also supporting others to act. This is why true leadership is so rare.

The IMIA will continue to create this environment of mutual growth and cooperation at a critical time for medical interpreters. As we are now seeing in national health care reform, interpreters are running the risk of being left behind. As a representative of the IMIA, I went to Washington DC for the fourth time this year and we will continue to knock on doors and share our strong message. We ask that you and your organizations support national certification primarily so that we can become a visible profession protected under the law in spite of the various competing interest groups on Capitol Hill. Medical interpreting is not merely an

activity that bilingual employees perform with no additional compensation. In order for patients to have access to medical interpreting, we need a viable profession with livable wages. When a medical interpreter is needed to assist a patient and provider to understand each other, it is imperative that this professional service be compensated appropriately. After all, ours is a highly skilled work. Whether or not we all agree on all the details, we can certainly unite around the bigger issues of visibility and reimbursement.

We applaud the theme of 2009 International Translator Day - the power of *‘Working Together’* - and will continue to forge collaborations with other organizations committed to national certification and reimbursement of medical interpreters.

Izabel S. Arocha, M.Ed.  
IMIA President



## Celebrate International Translation Day

IMIA Celebrates International Translation Day 2009 with a Reception at Conference on October 9<sup>th</sup> with an International Attire Reception. The 2009 International Translation Day theme invites translators around the world to take a fresh look at why and how it pays to join forces. The days of the fiercely solitary translator working in splendid isolation are numbered, say many industry observers. Not that massive collectivization is in sight: in this language-sensitive profession—or, more accurately, set of professions—a large share of added value remains intensely personal. To see the press release, go to: <http://www.fit-ift.org/download/en/itd-2009.pdf>



## National Certification Updates

The written and oral exams continue to be perfected through the rigorous methodology of testing professionals. The oral exam pilot has been finalized, while the written exam is undergoing subject matter expert reviews and rating, soon to undergo a piloting process as well.

## Oral Pilot Finalized, Written Exam Pilot to Start Very Soon

Are you interested in taking the Written Exam pilot test? You will be able to take it in any of sites across the country to get a flavor for what the test is really like. In order for us to replicate the real testing environment, we will need to charge \$75 for this test experience. The charge will cover the pilot testing administration fees and you will have that amount discounted when you undergo the final certification exam a month or two later. It is a great way to prepare for certification and find out firsthand what you will need to know. More information is coming soon, but if you are interested in participating in the written exam pilot, please email Dr. Lee at [nlee@certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](mailto:nlee@certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org).

### Tools to Study for Certification

- The Bartleby.com edition of Gray's Anatomy of the Human Body: <http://www.bartleby.com/107/>.
- Don't forget to review the standards of practice and codes of ethics for the written exam, you can find them on our website at [www.imiaweb.org](http://www.imiaweb.org)
- Have you ever gone to [www.webmd.org](http://www.webmd.org) ? It's a great site to practice sight translation. Just go to a page and start sight translating, it will greatly improve your interpretation skills.



## IMIA Conference Update – Regular Registration ends September 15!

Have you registered yet? If not do not delay as the date is fast approaching - a mere 5 weeks away! This year promises to be historic as we will demonstrate just how close we are to the certification and reimbursement of medical interpreters. The IMIA is only as strong as its members, so we need your support via memberships and conference attendance. If you have never attended the annual conference, this is the year to do it. If you come every year, make this year special by being proactive and participating in stakeholder groups or other activities in which you have not yet participated.

### Download the Flyer at

<http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/401.pdf>

### Check out the Menus at

[http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/401\\_2.pdf](http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/401_2.pdf)

### To register go to:

<http://www.imiaweb.org/conferences/reginfo2009.asp>



## IMIA Mentorship Program

Many interpreters do not know about the IMIA Mentorship Program. Mentors - or guides - can be indispensable to moving up in your career. They play a very important role in career planning. A mentor can help teach you what you need to know about your job, your organization and your field. Often this person is the most valuable resource for figuring out some of the less obvious information - for example, who the real decision-makers are at your organization or what fellowship review committees look for in applications - that can help you reach your career goals. In addition, a mentor may be able speak up on your behalf, such as when you are being considered for a staff position.

### Should I get a mentor?

It's a personal choice, but an interpreter who wants to grow professionally can benefit from having a relationship with a mentor. Since mentors can be crucial to professional success, it's worthwhile to take the time to find someone who can help guide you in the direction you want to go. You don't necessarily have to be located in the same geographical area to have a mentoring relationship. You can talk over the phone or communicate by e-mail rather than meeting in person. What is important is that your mentor has information you need to get where you want to go and is willing to share it.

If you don't currently have a mentor, first make sure that you are clear on your goals and objectives. Then consider who in your profession has attained similar goals. Think about who would be the best match for you and who would provide helpful information and contacts for you. Consider what you could offer to the relationship. If someone declines to be your mentor, just re-examine your options and start over. If someone says yes, then you've gained a valuable resource.

### How can I become a mentor?

If you are interested in being a mentor, email your resume to [IMIAweb@gmail.com](mailto:IMIAweb@gmail.com) Upon acceptance, your name and email will be posted on our Mentorship Program page.

### Qualifications required include:

- 1) Being a practicing professional medical interpreter
- 2) Successfully completed a medical interpreter training program of at least 40 hours
- 3) Successfully passed a medical interpreter performance test
- 4) Over 5 years of experience as a medical interpreter in several settings

### Qualifications preferred include:

- 5) Educational background in Translation and/or Interpreting of more than 40 hours, such as a College Certificate or Degree
- 6) Experience as a preceptor or mentor
- 7) Experience as an interpreter manager or educator
- 8) Experience and training in Mental Health

**Note:** The Mentorship program is a benefit for IMIA members only.



## Training Corner

Are you an interpreter trainer or instructor? Join your colleagues in other institutions in our monthly conference call discussions. The main objective of this group is to serve as a support for interpreter trainers, instructors, educators, and language coaches, and to promote discussions that will disseminate best practices for professional medical interpreter education. To join the Trainer's Circle and receive email notifications for upcoming Trainer's Circle Calls, contact [IMIAweb@gmail.com](mailto:IMIAweb@gmail.com). You must be an IMIA member to join the calls.



## IMIA Code of Ethics – Pick of the Month

**Principle #2- Interpreters will select the language and mode of interpretation that most accurately conveys the content and spirit of the messages of their clients.**

It is important for medical interpreters to know that the selection of which interpreting mode to utilize (consecutive, simultaneous, or sight translation) is their responsibility as professionals. This will depend on the context and environment of the encounter in which they are interpreting. The domain of practice of the interpreter confers him/her with the ultimate decisions on language and mode. Appropriate interpreter education will aid the interpreter in learning how to defend his/her word choices and mode decisions

with the paralinguistic language necessary to convey this reasoning to peers and other health care workers. While some interpreters would prefer to be told what to do, the definition of a professional in itself requires that he/she assume full responsibility for professional decisions. The Code makes it particularly clear that the ultimate goal is to convey the content and spirit of the message from one client to the other. This in itself should aid interpreters in making their selection: don't forget the goal - it is not only accuracy of terminology, **it is to convey the content and spirit of the message.**



## Twitter on Certification

*Maybe they just don't understand, they must be missing something. Medical Interpreter Certification guarantees quality. This is GREAT!*

Salvador Dipp Bueno



## National Health Care Reform

### Fact Sheet about National Certification and Reimbursement of Medical Interpreters distributed in Washington DC

The American people need National Healthcare Reform Legislation to address the right of Limited English Proficient (LEP) patients to have equitable access to healthcare via credentialed medical interpreting services, in accordance with Title VI, ADA, Executive Order 13166 and several state laws already in place across the country. Reimbursement mechanisms for screened, qualified and certified medical interpreters will ensure that LEP patients have access to the quality health care they deserve and are entitled to under Title VI.

To download: [http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/480\\_6.pdf](http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/480_6.pdf)

### What our opposition is saying:

#### Interpretation and the Healthcare bill

Washington, USA (Washington Times): English-language advocates say proposed health care reform plans would add billions to Medicare costs by providing on-site interpreters for low-income people with limited English skills who seek medical treatment. They are objecting to language included in the House

bill that would authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a study to figure out how to properly employ interpreters and pay them through the Medicare system. For more: [www.washtimes.com/news/2009/aug/20/hot-button-42117149/](http://www.washtimes.com/news/2009/aug/20/hot-button-42117149/)

**Did you see our response to the editor?**

## **Meaningful Access to Health is a Human Right**

*Response to the Washington Times Article By Amanda Carpenter  
Thursday, August 20, 2009*

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/aug/20/hot-button-42117149/>

English-language advocates oppose health care reform plans to provide on-site interpreters for low-income people with limited-English skills who seek medical treatment. What is not disclosed in the article is that according to the Institute of Health Improvement report we are already spending 73 Billion unnecessarily because of adverse health outcomes related to miscommunication. There is a severe lack of awareness of the independent studies that have been done that speak to the savings health care providers realize when they utilize professional interpreters (*Graham et al (2008; Jacobs et al (2007); Flores (2006); Bernstein et al (2002)*). Savings include: reduction in lab costs and diagnostics, reduced patient stays and reduction in use of the emergency room as well as greater compliance with preventative steps and medication compliance which in turn reduces repeat visits to hospitals for reoccurring symptoms. Most patients with limited-English skills in our country do not receive medical interpreting services when they seek medical care, so they simply do not understand their doctors and vice versa. How can this be in the world's richest nation?

An executive order signed by President Clinton in August 2000 stated that under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, people who don't speak English must be given meaningful access to services provided by federal agencies, including Medicare and Medicaid. State laws and other federal mandates and regulatory requirements also address a citizen's right to -meaningful access. Such a measure is good public policy not only because it reduces liabilities for health care providers, but because it reduces risks to patient safety and it also saves lives. For more information on this issue, see [http://languageline.com/wp\\_freeformedia](http://languageline.com/wp_freeformedia) or [www.imiaweb.org/resources/AnnotatedBibliography.asp](http://www.imiaweb.org/resources/AnnotatedBibliography.asp).

We applaud President Barack Obama in his resolve to make meaningful national health care reform a reality. As he states:

*"Making sure every American has access to high quality health care is one of the most important challenges of our time and is a key goal of national health care reform."*



## **4<sup>th</sup> Annual MAY 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 in Washington DC!**

We are planning our own rally and Congress visit on the Fourth Annual National Certification of Medical Interpreters Open Forum on April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 and we invite you to come with us so that every single state congressional office receives a visit from medical interpreter advocates. We need your help and want to know: *Are you coming?*



## **US News**

### **Medco will significantly improve access**

National pharmacy benefit management company Medco will significantly improve access to its services for limited English proficient members in 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced today. As the nation's largest mail-order pharmacy operation, Medco dispenses more than one hundred million prescriptions a year through the mail. Following an investigation of a complaint filed on behalf of a Spanish-speaking member with HHS' Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Medco developed a multi-faceted plan to improve services to non-English speakers. For more, see <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/06/20090615a.htm>

### **Public Health Insurance: A lack of quality medical interpreters has devastating consequences**

California, USA (Asian Week): Minority communities, such as the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, of which 21% is uninsured, are among those who stand to benefit from healthcare reform. Not only would healthcare reform with a robust public option ensure that more AAPIs are covered, but it would ensure that they are better served. For example, 39% of AAPIs are limited English proficient. When this population is unable to communicate with their doctors due to the lack of quality medical interpreters and translators, there are often devastating consequences, including misdiagnosis or mistreatment. For more: [www.asianweek.com/2009/08/26/robust-public-health-insurance-option-a-must/](http://www.asianweek.com/2009/08/26/robust-public-health-insurance-option-a-must/)



### **New Mexico: Multilingual Interpreting Program Aims to Aid Courts, Health Care**

New Mexico, USA (UNM): Multilingual speakers can enhance their language abilities while earning certificates in medical interpreting, justice system interpreting, and bilingual communication through the New Mexico Center for Language Access, which begins accepting students this fall. The program is managed by UNM-Los Alamos in collaboration with Doña Ana Community College and Central New Mexico Community College. For more information, please visit: [www.unm.edu/~market/cgi-bin/archives/004195.html](http://www.unm.edu/~market/cgi-bin/archives/004195.html)

### **Washington: Lack of translators still hampers intelligence**

Washington, USA (Washington Times): U.S. national security agencies remain woefully short of foreign-language speakers and translators nearly eight years after the Sept. 11 attacks resulted in a war on an enemy that often communicates in relatively obscure dialects, current and former officials say. For more information: [www.washtimes.com/news/2009/aug/31/lack-of-translators-still-hampers-intelligence](http://www.washtimes.com/news/2009/aug/31/lack-of-translators-still-hampers-intelligence)

**Georgia: Interpreters donating their services a solution to healthcare reform?** Georgia, USA (Times Herald): Dr. James T. Sandwich, M.D., a Fayette County dermatologist, told the group of about 300 at the Coweta County Fairgrounds he volunteers at a free clinic in Fayette County. He said many physicians do some volunteer clinic work, and others provide services without cost in their offices. [...] "I would like to see more physicians donate their time," he said. Sandwich suggested incentives might encourage more doctors to get involved with free clinics. He said there also are needs for nurses and other medical professionals to donate their services -- as well as translators." For more information, visit: [www.times-herald.com/local/Medical-clinics-offer-free-low-cost-services-837366](http://www.times-herald.com/local/Medical-clinics-offer-free-low-cost-services-837366)

### **Market Research Report Pinpoints 14 Sections of Proposed U.S. Health Care Reform Legislation**

BOSTON, Aug. 20 /PRNewswire/ -- With an estimated 50 million people who speak languages other than English at home, the United States health care system serves one of the most linguistically diverse patient populations in the world. A new report from market research firm Common Sense Advisory answers the question, "How will health care reform affect patients with limited English proficiency (LEP)?" The firm's new report, "Health Care Reform and Language Services," pinpoints 14 sections of "America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009"

that will influence the nation's provision of health care interpreting and translation services. For more:

<http://health.einnews.com/article.php?nid=661108>

### **Arizona: DOJ to County Board of Supervisors: provide interpreters or else**

Arizona, USA (Examiner): The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors has received a formal letter from the US Department of Justice (DOJ) indicating that they are initiating an investigation into possible civil rights violations by the Board. The complaint contends that the Board of Supervisors did not provide Spanish interpreters at tax payer expense to accommodate those who were unable to speak English. For more information,: [www.examiner.com/x-16231-Maricopa-County-Conservative-Examiner~y2009m8d18-DOJ-to-County-Board-of-Supervisors-provide-interpreters-or-else](http://www.examiner.com/x-16231-Maricopa-County-Conservative-Examiner~y2009m8d18-DOJ-to-County-Board-of-Supervisors-provide-interpreters-or-else)

### **Good health comes in many languages**

Merillville, IN (Post Tribune): Non-English speakers can face many problems navigating life in the U.S., but when they are ill, the issue can take on life or death proportions. So Maria Schwieter, a medical interpreter for LaPorte Regional Health System, is putting on a course to teach others to do medical interpreting. The short-term goal, she said, is to train enough people to have a solid rotation of interpreters for LRHS in the near future. Most of the hospital systems rely on an international phone service for translation services instead of having people on staff. For more: <http://www.post-trib.com/aboutus/contact/index.html>

### **Welfare Agency Is Sued Over Translation Service**

New York, NY (NY Times): An advocacy group sued New York City's welfare agency Tuesday morning, seeking to force it to comply with laws and policies that require translation and interpretation services for its clients. A 2003 city law, the Equal Access to Human Services Act [pdf], passed after initial resistance from the Bloomberg administration,, gave city agencies five years to phase in comprehensive translation services, supplied by phone or in person. In addition, it required that city forms had to be made available in six main languages: Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian and Spanish. The deadline was February 2009. <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/11/welfare-agency-is-sued-over-translation-service/>

### **Group launches legal resource for Somali speakers**

Minneapolis, MN (AP): A Minnesota legal aid group is launching a new Website to provide the state's Somali speakers with links to legal resources and information in their language. SomaliLawHelp.org links to 75 Somali language legal resources including fact sheets, booklets, videos, court forms and a glossary

of legal terms. Its backers hope to continue to compile links that will add to the resources on the site. For more information, visit: <http://www.kttc.com/Global/story.asp?S=10889436>

### **New York City Council votes pharmacies to translate**

New York, USA (WABC): The New York City Council on Thursday approved a measure that will require pharmacies with more than four stores in the five boroughs to provide free oral and written translation services to thousands in need of prescription translation assistance. For more information, please visit: [abclocal.go.com/wabc/story?section=news/politics&id=6975066](http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/story?section=news/politics&id=6975066)

### **USA: Interpretation and the Healthcare bill**

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## **IMIA Leadership News**

This is an important time for the organization. With the increased amount of activities and scope of the organization, the IMIA requires a full Executive Board at the helm. The IMIA Board has the following board vacancies to fill: Secretary, Treasure, and three Board Directors. As a trade association that represents medical interpreters, the Bylaws stipulate that every board member has to be an Active member (practicing medical interpreter) in good standing, willing to volunteer and advocate for the professional medical interpreter foremost. The IMIA Executive Board meets once a month. International members are encouraged to apply.

Desired qualifications include a passion for language access in health care and a strong desire to make a difference and have a positive impact in the field. Upholding the IMIA Bylaws, Excellence Standards and Goals is required, as these are the anchoring values of the organization. If you are interested in joining this International Board, please send us your resume with a 200-500 word letter of intent summarizing what you can do for the

profession, the association, and why you should be appointed to the IMIA Executive Board. As the Bylaws stipulates, vacant positions can filled by appointment of the Board by majority vote as interim board positions until the next IMIA Elections, which will take place in the Summer/Fall of 2010. **The deadline for board submissions is September 30th midnight EST.**

Position descriptions:

### ***Board Secretary Job Description***

1. Is a member of the Board and is a member of the Executive Committee (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer)
2. Maintains records of the board and ensures effective management of organization's records.
3. Publishes and manages minutes of board meetings, and ensures minutes are distributed to members shortly after each meeting.
4. Is sufficiently familiar with legal documents (articles, by-laws, IRS letters, etc.) to note applicability during meetings.

### ***Board Treasurer Job Description***

1. Is a member of the Board and is a member of the Executive Committee (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer).
2. Manages finances of the organization.
3. Administrates fiscal matters of the organization, working closely with organization's bookkeeper and accountant.
4. Provides periodic reports to the board and annual budget to the board for approval.
5. Ensures development and board review of financial policies and procedures.

### ***Board Member Job Description***

1. Regularly attends board meetings and important related meetings.
2. Makes serious commitment to participate actively in board and committee work.
3. Volunteers for and willingly accepts assignments and completes them on time.
4. Stays informed about committee matters, prepares well for meetings, and reviews and comments on minutes and reports.
5. Gets to know other board and members and builds a collegial working relationship that contributes to consensus.
6. Is an active participant in the board's annual evaluation and planning efforts.
7. Participates in fund raising for the organization (*nonprofit only*).



## Book of the Month

### **Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress**

*by Lawrence E. Harrison, Samuel P. Huntington, Samuel P. Huntington*

Why do some cultures achieve economic success while others languish? Why do some countries develop successful democracies while others continue to undergo political upheavals? Are these discrepancies because of the cultural values of a people and their country? How important are these values, and can they be modified? These questions and others are discussed within the wide-ranging, thought-provoking, and sometimes quite controversial essays presented here. Drawn from a symposium sponsored by the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, essays by David Landes, Lucien Pye, Barbara Crossette, and others cover a wide variety of topics, from the effect of culture on various countries throughout the world to a discussion of culture and its role in gender issues. Also of interest are essays on how cultural issues may be the root cause of African American underachievement in the United States. Those interested in economics, cultural studies, international studies, and political science will find much to think about in this challenging collection.



## About the IMIA eNews

The IMIA eNews is an industry-wide 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 monthly updates on useful websites, toolkits, and available trainings/resources. Of course, we also bring you the latest in IMIA news. 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 key information 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)