



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION

Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

Meeting with interpreters and translators in Cuba

By Linda Joyce, IMIA State Chapter Chair, WV and Certification and Testing Director for the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (National Board)

In February of this year I went to Cuba for two weeks on a research trip and as part of that, visited with colleagues in the Cuban Association of Translators and Interpreters (ACTI).

I met with Gisela Odio Zamora, President and Gretchen González Nieto, Secretary, of ACTI (a nongovernmental organization). I had worked with them before in 2011 at the Seventh Symposium on Translation, Terminology and Interpretation sponsored by ACTI and the Canadian Translation, Terminology and Interpretation Council (CTTIC). The IMIA and its division, the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters, have had representatives present workshops at the last two symposiums there – first when I went in 2011 and then Rita Weil, Secretary of the National Board, attended and presented last December. The next Symposium will take place in December, 2014, so think about making your plans - the U.S. allows travel to Cuba for professional and academic purposes.

During the trip this year I spent time with colleagues in ACTI and we attended a very interesting public presentation by Grisel Ojeda Amador, author of the *History of Translation and Interpretation in Cuba*. After the presentation I was asked to say a few words about the IMIA and the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters.

Translators and interpreters in Cuba attend the Faculty of Foreign Languages for six years in order to earn their credentials to work in the field. Besides their native Spanish, the students acquire at least two additional languages; some up to three or four. I met Ana Isabel Fuentes Vega, who does translations and interpreting for German, English and Portuguese. There is a website for Cuban interpreters and translators that contains the ACTI code of ethics and other useful information (in Spanish) at www.sld.cu/sitios/traduccion/index.php

Several medical interpreters and translators work at the Cuban National Center of Information for Medical Sciences (INFOMED). INFOMED is a network of persons and institutions that work and collaborate to facilitate the access of information to better the health of Cubans and all people worldwide. Their web site (www.sld.cu/) is a wealth of information and resources.

The National Health Care system in Cuba is free for its citizens. For foreign guests visiting or working in Cuba there are clinics and hospitals specifically for them. To work in these facilities, the personnel must speak the languages that are most encountered. In addition there are translators, interpreters and professors in the medical field.

The IMIA is an international organization and we collaborate with sister associations around the world. The IMIA belongs to the International Federation of Translators (FIT). Meeting and working with our colleagues in Cuba is just one more way to further the bonds and understanding between interpreters in a neighboring country, Cuba.



Photo: Left to right: Ana, Grisel, Linda and Gretchen, Feb. , 2013