The National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters

Certification of Medical Interpreters
Yes we can, and we will, in 2009!

March 20th 2009
FOUNDERS

International Medical Interpreter Association (IMIA)
- Founded in 1986, with 1,900 members, IMIA is the oldest & largest medical interpreter association in the world. IMIA is revered by medical interpreters as the ultimate experts in the medical interpreting field.

Language Line® University (LLU)
- Is a globally recognized interpreter testing, training and certification division of Language Line Services, the world’s founder and largest over the phone, video and on-site interpreter provider.

PSI
- For over 60 years they have offered comprehensive solutions from test development to delivery to results processing, including licensing & certification tests for corporations, professional associations and government agencies.
The purpose of this collaboration is to:

- consolidate resources and avoid duplication
- unite existing efforts into a ‘single’ national certification program
- expedite the process and make certification available to the largest number of interpreters in the largest number of languages in the largest number of locations
- model a multi-organizational collaboration that recognizes not only IMIA and LLU certification efforts but also other organizations efforts without compromising their intellectual property
- engage in further research and advocacy
- have a more comprehensive project planning process to make sure that we meet the requirements needed to obtain NOCA/NCCA accreditation
NATIONAL BOARD PRINCIPLES

- **Interpreters’ Ownership of Process** - The certification program is for interpreters and therefore it is interpreters that own the process. The IMIA was incorporated for this very purpose and will guarantee and ensure that the best interests of medical interpreters are protected.
NATIONAL BOARD PRINCIPLES

Inclusiveness

- Interpreters and other stakeholders have been sending us their opinions and reactions directly by email and we continue to incorporate their feedback.
- The Yearly National Medical Interpreter Certification Forum has been open to all to provide guidance to the process.
- This process is inclusive to national testing companies and others that want to participate, without having to release their legal rights to their intellectual property.
- The National Board is committed to having an inclusive selection process of its members.
NATIONAL BOARD PRINCIPLES

Transparency

Presentations about the process have been made in the last ten years to multiple conferences and venues. The number of presentations grew in the last two years, and were presented extensively in conferences in the US and internationally. In addition, the IMIA and LLU has been publishing press releases about certification since 2001. Last, we have maintained several groups apprised of our latest developments, including:

- Consortium of Interpreter Associations (COIA), Since October 11, 2006
- Annual National Medical Interpreter Certification Forums (NMICF) since 2007
- Forum of Coordinators of Interpreter Services (FOCIS) annual presentations since 2001
- Global Advisory Council (GAC), since May 2008
- National Coalition of Certification (NCC) since May 2008
Credibility

The process has undergone a DACUM Job Analysis in 1995, and another one in January 2009 through our collaboration with LLU.

It has also undergone two pilots, one in 2001 and another in 2003, funded by the Office of Minority Health of the United States Office of Human Services. The last pilot was supported and included the participation of two colleague organizations, the National Council of Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) and the California Healthcare Interpreting Association (CHIA).
National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA)

- National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) is the body of NOCA that regulates and accredits certification programs nationwide, promoting excellence and quality certification processes.
- Currently we are NOCA members.

Why are we seeking NOCA accreditation?

- To ensure the quality of the certification process
- To gain state, federal and national recognition

Note: NOCA current standards exceed the requirements of the American Psychological Association and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Organizations that are accredited by NOCA: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties, Commission for Case Managers, many others (100+)
One of the root causes for Healthcare Disparities is lack of effective communication and failure to address this hinders patients from receiving quality of care and exposes the healthcare industry to many liabilities.

IOM report *Crossing the Quality Chasm* suggests there are six elements tied to quality of care and out of those six elements there are three that are directly linked to communication; effectiveness, safety & equity.

Research has shown that LEP patients are much more likely to suffer from adverse events due to communication errors and that these events tend to have a far greater clinical consequence.

Research has also shown that in the presence of communication difficulties healthcare providers may tend to order unnecessary tests for conditions that could have been diagnosed through a simple basic history taken with a qualified interpreter.
PRIMARY BENEFITS

Patients and Providers

- Ensures effective communication between providers and patients
- Prevents adverse effects due to use of unqualified interpreters

Interpreters

- Provides a professional credential that crosses state lines
- Gives one credential for all interpreters (both in-person & remote)
- Provides the ability of being tested once and not by every health care facility they apply to

Healthcare Industry

- Prevents liability issues due to incompetent interpreting
- Reduces the length of time it takes to validate candidate qualifications and eliminates the administrative costs each organization must incur to go through this process

Government

- Provides national credential that crosses state lines in case of national disasters
- State health departments don’t need to spend to develop state certification
GOVERNANCE

The Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters is a group of organizations that will be appointed to implement policy related to certification program operation. Several stakeholder groups (e.g., the public and other consumers, trainers, employers, regulators, and certificants) will be represented. This constitutes the certifying entity and will have authority over all essential certification decisions.

Policies and procedures will be established to protect against undue influence that could compromise the integrity of the certification process.

To avoid conflicts of interest between certification and education functions, the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters will not be responsible for accreditation of educational or training programs or courses of study leading to the certification.
CREDENTIALS

Offers 3 credentials to cover all languages:

1. **CERTIFIED MEDICAL INTERPRETER (CMI)**
   - Successful completion of process with written & performance exam
   - *Initially available in 22 languages, expanding to 30 by 2010*

2. **QUALIFIED MEDICAL INTERPRETER (QMI)**
   - Successful completion of process with written & qualification exam
   - *For minority languages done in partnership with other national testing providers*

3. **SCREENED MEDICAL INTERPRETER (SMI)**
   - Successful completion of process with written & review of portfolio (similar to Canadian & Australian recognition processes)
   - *For newly emerging languages*
PROCESS FOR CERTIFICATION

Step 1. **Register** for certification
- Meet basic eligibility pre-requisites (knowledge, education & skills training)

Step 2. Take the National Board **Written Exam**
- Demonstrate competency in knowledge areas (proctored/administered by PSI)

Step 3. **Depending on the non-English working language**
- Take the **National Performance Exam**
- Take the **Qualification Exam**
- Undergo the **Portfolio Review**

Step 4. **Re-certification**
- 3.0 CEUs, over a 5 year period, no re-testing required
RE-CERTIFICATION

Requirements:

✓ 3.0 Continuing Education Units (30 hours within 5 years)
✓ No re-testing required

Why do you need to be re-certified?

✓ Protect patient safety
✓ Honor a patient’s right to obtain services of a competent interpreter to ensure best outcomes
✓ Prevent interpreters, once certified, to lag on field experience for many years
WHAT ABOUT ACCESS?

All interpreters, all languages, all places

- PSI will administer the tests via the 600 proctored sites they have nationwide. Information about the locations available at their site: [www.psionline.com](http://www.psionline.com)
WHAT ABOUT ACCESS?

Interpreters with disabilities

**Blind or Visually Impaired**
- The written test is designed in a platform that is compatible with screen reading programs like JAWS and Windoweyes.

**Physically Challenged or Mobility Impaired**
- Candidates will be able to request special accommodations to access testing centers
PROGRESS REPORT SINCE JAN. 09

☑ Conducted Several Focus Groups
☑ Conducted National Surveys
☑ Started advocacy efforts in Washington, DC
☑ Developed presentation & Industry FAQ Guide, multiple presentations given
☑ Completed Job Analysis with over 1,500 participants
☑ National Board established to oversee certification
☑ SME Test reviews in progress
☑ Currently PSI is evaluating the exams with testing experts & psychometricians
☑ Final pilot testing
☑ Convening on May 1st in Denver, CO to promote national certification
JOIN US ON MAY 1ST DENVER, CO

3rd Annual National Medical Interpreter Certification 9a.m.–5p.m.

- **Convene** to discuss the important topic of national medical certification. Hear from national and international speakers and subject matter experts sharing important updates and relevant information. The forum also consists of round table sessions and an expert panel.

- **Past attendees** have included interpreters, providers, associations, state officials, advocates, policy makers, language service providers, educators, trainers and international representatives.

- This is an open collaboration that crosses state lines and industry sectors to enable a broader perspective – all are welcome to participate. There is no registration fee!

  *contact Jeanette Anders janders@languageline.com for more information*
What Next?

- Continue to promote national certification for medical interpreters with other organizations, coalitions, and government entities.

- Continue advocating for the reimbursement of medical interpreter services because:
  - Unfunded mandate – Title VI, ADA, Executive Order 13166, State Laws
  - Hospitals capped by administrative budgets
  - Cost of interpreter is minimal compared to cost of delays or additional tests/visits/hospitalizations
  - It is time we provide the assurance of safety and communication for patients and providers alike to eliminate healthcare disparities due to language access!
A website dedicated to National Certification is in development with basic information now with additional information being posted regularly and includes a link to send your questions and feedback.

www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org