

Cultural News



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Healthcare Interpreter Training 2018

Written by Elena Morrow, Manager of Medical Interpreting Services

“Connecting Worlds” is an introductory course in healthcare interpreting. It meets the Joint Commission requirements of the basic training for staff and agency medical interpreters nationwide. The course is 40 hours long, and it incorporates lecture, practice, terminology review, and an in-depth study of medical interpreter roles and ethical standards.

Medical Interpreting Services Department holds this training on an annual basis to train new staff interpreters, visiting externs from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, and the Sacramento and Bay Area community interpreters who would like to specialize in healthcare.

MIS Department Manager Elena Morrow and MIS Supervisor Foua Ly spent a good six months updating the course with the latest information on national healthcare interpreter certification, and registering a record number of participants from the community. It was the largest class MIS has ever held – 30 students total.

The trainers tweaked the existing training module and incorporated many new videos and exercises to make the learning process more engaging. All participants enjoyed the training; many wished that the training was much longer and more intense. Many expressed their appreciation of the instructors' work, where complex information was presented in an easy to understand way. And several trainees already applied to take the national certification test!

Medical Interpreting Department is currently accepting applications for the 2019 class in healthcare interpreting. Tentative timeframe: summer of 2019. Please email Foua Ly ly@UCDAVIS.EDU.



SEPTEMBER 2018 CALENDAR

BABY SAFETY MONTH
NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH
NATIONAL TRANSLATORS MONTH

- 1- Religious year begins (Orthodox Christian)
- 3- Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)
- 8- Nativity of Virgin Mary (Christian)
- 10-11- Rosh Hashannah (Jewish)
- 13- Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)
- 14- Yom Kippur (Jewish)
- 17- Constitution Day (US)
- 21- Ashura (Islam)
- 22- Mabon- Ostara (Wicca)
- 23-29- Child Passenger Safety Week (US)
- 24-31- Sukkot (Jewish)
- 27- Ancestor Appreciation Day (US)
- 29- Family Health and Fitness Day (US)
- 30- International Translation/Interpreter Day

Reflection on the Five Week Externship at UCDH Medical Interpreting Services

Written by Helen Cheng, 2nd year Master's Program student at Middlebury Institute of International Studies Monterey



My experience as an extern during the five week externship with Medical Interpreting Services was a highly rewarding and fulfilling one. I had the opportunity to harness the skills I acquired during my study at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey while having the privilege to apply the skills in the real world and specifically in the medical setting.

From week one to week three, I shadowed the staff interpreters and started interpreting independently under the supervision of staff interpreters during weeks four and five. In addition to shadowing, I learned about medical interpreting in the training sessions every Friday. The training was conducted by Department Manager Elena Morrow, and our group of trainees included many different languages and skill levels. The lectures and practice dialogues focused on the professional ethics of medical interpreters, our skills, roles and duties, legal issues, and medical terminology. In between shadowing and interpreting tasks I worked on written translation projects. Mali Thongsonlone who supervises all written projects in the Department, devoted her time to finding useful materials for me to translate. I needed to go through background reading before I could finish the assignment. The translation projects covered a wide range of areas, such as consent form, patient information materials, questionnaires, etc. A nationally certified translator was very supportive in proofreading my work and sending his comments and feedbacks regularly.

I found that I needed to develop the short-term memory skills more, along with note-taking. Accuracy is a hugely important issue, as any omission or change in meaning can have dramatic consequences. And since I am still at the early stage of adapting to the medical interpreting field, I experienced anxiety from time to time, so I chose note-taking to improve the accuracy. This strategy also helped me organize the

logic because I have time to compare whether the information is new or not instead of leaving out the information carelessly. It also increased my stamina by allowing me to concentrate for longer periods of time. Alongside consecutive interpreting, I had a chance to practice sight translation of written documents and simultaneous interpreting, which is not commonly used in the medical setting. I also acquired new skills such as medical vocabulary. I learned medical terms in three ways: through shadowing the staff interpreters, through additional background reading and watching videos on the topic, and through the Friday training sessions during which we learned about major body systems. As a result, I gained deeper understanding in areas such as gestational diabetes, cardiovascular disease, ophthalmology, etc. The preparation was very helpful when I assisted the patient at their next appointment. A better command of the related knowledge and medical history helped me understand how to process the messages in that particular context.

For me, another impediment to high-quality medical interpreting services was the professional ethics. For example, having grown up in a collective culture, I found the professional boundary of impartiality to be challenging – many patients want to get to know the interpreter on a personal level, but our professional ethics tells us to avoid creating close relationships with patients. I also found that stress management was an area for me to improve, as I sometimes experienced breakdowns when the providers informed the family of the impending death of the patient. Remaining calm and unaffected in difficult situations is something I should learn and practice in the future. Overall, I felt very comfortable during my externship at the UC Davis Medical Center. The department atmosphere was always positive, with interpreters ready to support each other and the externs. Our supervisors checked up on us, making sure that we were on track. We celebrated the end of our externship with a cake. Externs received certificates of completion and a general evaluation report that pointed out our weaknesses and strengths. And when I came back to finish my second year of the Master's program at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, I will be much more confident when dealing with medical documents. I am not longer intimidated by the technicalities involved, which I see as a good starting point. I will continue to build my skills and will try attaining a national certification as a medical interpreter.

Learning how to interpret in medical settings also helped to improve my liaison interpreting skills (or public service interpreting) in that I learned how to facilitate messages effectively with different parties, and how to seek clarification quickly. This is important because at MIIS, we are always protected by the booth and gradually become uncomfortable with people looking at us while we perform the interpreting task.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to all MIS supervisors and staff for their time and professionalism in providing me with a real-life exposure to the highly dynamic and challenging patient care environment, and for guiding me through this learning experience with positive reinforcement!

New Staff Interpreter Profile: Pao Moua

Pao is the new MIS Hmong interpreter, a native of Laos of Hmong ancestry. Pao came to the United States in 1990. He obtained an Associate degree in social services at the Fresno City College.

Pao is fluent in English and Hmong, in addition he speaks fluent French. Prior to coming to UC Davis Health, he worked as a part time freelance Hmong Medical interpreter for the past 20 years.

The reason he chose this field as a career is the rewarding service of helping and supporting the Hmong community. Pao said language is very important, especially in the healthcare setting. Language barriers make it difficult for patients and providers to communicate. Because of this, he takes pride in his role as a Medical Interpreter, ensuring that everything that is said is communicated accurately.

According to Pao, his biggest accomplishment is joining the UC Davis Health Medical Interpreting team. It has always been his dream and he is proud of this accomplishment.

During Pao's spare time, he enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, fishing and playing sports.

We asked Pao how does he feel about joining the UCDMC Medical Interpreting department? In his own words, "The MIS department is a mixture of professional interpreters from different backgrounds of traditions and cultures. They treat everyone with high levels of respect and are very supportive towards one another. I consider my work place to be like my second home and my coworkers are like my second family. This is what motivates me to come to work every day".

Welcome aboard, Pao! We are happy to have you as part of the UC Davis Medical Center's Interpreting Team.

