

Interpreting Stakeholder Group

Quality Health Care for Diverse Populations Conference – September 2008

Carol Berg, ISG Chair

ISG Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission

To improve the delivery of spoken language interpreter services in Minnesota, and to promote the professionalization of the interpreting industry as a whole.

Goal

Equal access to health care and human services for limited English proficient populations.

Objectives:

- Identify and promote interpreter training opportunities among prospective interpreters and employers across the state in order to increase the number of interpreters who have completed at least a minimum of interpreter training.
- Identify and implement internships for interpreters who would benefit from shadowing other professionals.
- Discuss effective evaluation mechanisms for quality of interpreting (standardized pre- and post-testing, consumer feedback, health care provider/user input).
- Explore options for enhanced interpreter service delivery models in MN.
- Seek funding opportunities to expand avenues of training, evaluation, and partnerships.
- Address issues that would help make the profession of interpreting more attractive (e.g., appropriate reimbursement for qualified interpreters, employment opportunities, education of providers, etc.).

ISG Members and Structure

Members

The ISG is a collaborative of stakeholders (medical, legal, and educational interpreters, interpreter service agencies, institutions involved in interpreter training, hospitals, Area Health Education Centers, health care organizations, health and human service providers, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Departments of Labor and Commerce, the Minnesota Supreme Court, staff from various legislative offices, and others) interested in improving the quality and delivery of interpreter services in Minnesota. Since January 2004 this group, called the Interpreting Stakeholders Group (ISG), meets regularly to share efforts, ideas, information and planning.

Meetings

The stakeholder group had its first meeting at the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association regional conference on October 18, 2003. The group decided to meet on a monthly basis to address these objectives. Meetings are held the third Friday of the month from 10:00-12:00.

Structure

The ISG operates as a Committee under the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA) and is governed as a volunteer collaborative through the following structure while we explore options for a more permanent "home" for our joint activities:

The Executive Committee has power to exercise the authority of the members in the management of the business of ISG. The Executive Committee will act only in the intervals between meetings of the members and will at all times be subject to the direction of the ISG members. Terms of the executive committee are for one year and are limited to three consecutive terms. Half of the Executive Committee should have staggered terms so there is "institutional memory" on the Committee. The Executive Committee will arrange for ISG meeting dates/locations, set agendas, and oversee communications with ISG members. ISG members will elect representatives from each participating sector to serve on an Executive Committee.

Accomplishments

Some of ISG's accomplishments are listed here:

- Created a table of interpreter training options (is currently being updated).
- Developed a business case presentation which outlines the importance of addressing interpreter issues and how various partners can play a role.
- Sponsored presentations on the current status of interpreter certification in the courts and in health care, the requirements of the ASL interpreter internship program at the College of St. Catherine's internship models, and apprenticeship models.
- Developed a table of interpreter mentoring models.
- Received grants from Bush Foundation and Otto Bremer Foundation for the *Linking Voices* project which includes five major activities:
 - 3-day Interpreter Ethics and Skills Training workshop offered in Crookston November 2006, Worthington December 2006, Mankato March 2007.
 - Tuition scholarships for 16 students in Willmar and Crookston to take *Introduction to Interpreting* course, spring semester 2007, to be followed by *Consecutive Interpreting* fall semester 2007
 - Intensive 70-hour Interpreter Trainer Training course for 12 Somali, Hmong, Oromo and Spanish interpreters at the University of Minnesota, January 12-13 2007
 - Development of materials for interpreter training
 - Convened an Expert Panel on community interpreter certification in the Twin Cities June 13-15 2007.
 - Interpreter Trainer Training course for 12 greater Minnesota participants August 20-30, 2007
 - Making available updated University of Minnesota materials and new materials for Somali and Hmong interpreter training



Accomplishments (continued)

- Advocated for passage of 2008 legislation to create a statewide roster of spoken language health care interpreters.
- ISG Registry Development Committee is working with the Minnesota Department of Health to develop the statewide roster and assist with developing a plan for the roster to evolve to a registry and to plan for establishing a certification process.
- Began serving as official member of the National Coalition for Health Care Interpreter Certification to support a cooperative approach to certification across the U.S.



Hosting the interpreter certification expert panel in June 2007.

Current Priorities

The ISG formed three committees to accomplish 2008 priorities in the following areas:

- Education/Training: Chair is Peter Turpin (peter.turpin@swsc.org)
- Interpreter Registry Development: Chair is Tara Gibbs (tara@visi.com)
- ISG Communications: Chair is Carol Berg (cberg@ucare.org)

Lessons Learned

We have learned many things through this collaborative work including:

- It is essential to build trust among diverse members of the stakeholder group to agree on common goals and work plan.
- Participants must be willing to take on challenging issues even though consensus may be difficult to achieve.
- Need to emphasize common ground while working out differing view points on how to address the complex layers of improving interpreter services delivery.
- Having representatives from diverse public and private sector at the table allows us to identify and address system issues in interpreter training and services.

Continuing Challenges

ISG is addressing these continuing challenges:

- Securing stable funding to carry out activities of the ISG that require financial resources.
- Completing our ambitious work plans primarily through in-kind staff time or volunteer help from participating organizations (it would be helpful to have funds to pay for some staff support of ISG activities).
- Prioritizing work that needs to be done to achieve goals given the resource constraints of the collaborative.
- Determining if ISG should adopt a more formal organizational structure to achieve its objectives.



Interpreter students practicing skills.

Next Steps

Here are some next steps ISG is taking to address current priorities:

- Seek additional funding for training and certification-related activities (have a fiscal agent relationship with International Institute of Minnesota to receive funds).
- Seek support for tuition scholarships for further ITV courses in greater Minnesota communities
- Complete module on provider training on how to work with interpreters and work with providers to disseminate this training.
- Continue active involvement in the National Coalition on Health Care Interpreter Certification and its committees.

More Information

If you would like more information about ISG, you may visit the UMTIA web site at: www.umtia.com/isg

You will find many ISG documents posted here.

Network with ISG

We want to network and collaborate with you in efforts to improve interpreter service delivery in your area. You are invited to be in communication with us in order to share ideas and resources. We can learn much from each other.

We look forward to working with you!

Please contact the ISG Chair, Carol Berg, at cberg@ucare.org