



Workshop Descriptions, Objectives, and Bios

Day 1 – May 15, 2026

Session 1 – Keynote presentation 9:30 am – 10:30 am (60 minutes / 1 hour session)

Title – Clinician Multilingualism: A Missing Piece in the Language Access Puzzle

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Pilar Ortega, MD, MGM

Abstract: Across the United States, millions of patients depend on communication in non-English languages in order to best access and receive safe, high-quality health care. While the field of language access has made major strides in interpreter training and standards, one critical component remains understudied and often overlooked: the language skills of clinicians themselves. This keynote presentation will explore new research on clinician multilingualism and its implications for patient experience, clinician and interpreter workflow, and health system quality. Drawing on empirical findings, Dr. Ortega will describe the Physician Oral Language Observation Matrix (POLOM), a validated tool designed to assess clinicians' language proficiency in clinical contexts. She will examine how standardized clinician proficiency assessments can clarify roles, support safer team-based care, and ultimately enhance the working relationships between clinicians and medical interpreters. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how clinician language skills can be evaluated and incorporated as a key piece of the language access puzzle—and why interpreters and clinicians should be partners in shaping the future of multilingual care.

Objectives:

By the end of this keynote, participants will be able to:

1. Describe current evidence about clinician multilingualism, including what is known, what remains unknown, and how clinician language skills impact communication quality and interpreter workflow.
2. Explain the purpose and evidence for the Physician Oral Language Observation Matrix (POLOM) as a method for assessing clinician language proficiency in health care settings.
3. Identify ways that validated clinician language assessments can support interpreters, improve interprofessional collaboration, and contribute to safer, more effective team-based multilingual care.



Bio:

Dr. Pilar Ortega is a Latina multilingual board-certified emergency medicine physician, scientist, and executive leader with expertise in language access in health care and medical education. Dr. Ortega is Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Clinician Multilingualism, where she develops and implements scalable solutions for teaching and testing clinician skills for communicating with patients in non-English languages. Dr. Ortega is also Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Medical Spanish, a non-profit organization focused on education, research, mentorship, and collaborations to improve health for the Spanish-speaking population.

She holds an appointment as Clinical Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine and Medical Education at the University of Illinois Chicago and serves as a member of the executive committee for the Medical Organization for Latino Advancement.

Dr. Ortega has published more than 55 peer-reviewed publications and four books, including the popular textbook series, Spanish and the Medical Interview, for physicians to enhance their Spanish-language clinical skills. She serves as Collection Editor at the MedEdPORTAL journal and as a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges Research in Medical Education committee. She is also a medical advisor in the development of the first online, open access Panhispanic Dictionary of Medical Terminology (Diccionario panhispánico de términos médicos), a project involving the academies of medicine of 13 Spanish-speaking countries around the globe.

Dr. Ortega earned her undergraduate degree in philosophy at the Johns Hopkins University, her Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, her residency in emergency medicine at the University of Chicago, and a master's degree in graphic medicine from the Universidad Internacional de Andalucía.

Session 2: 11:00 am – 12:30 pm (90 minutes / 1.5 hour session)

Title – Decoding Lab Results for Medical Interpreters

Target Audience: Interpreters, Educators

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Bernardo A. Valencia, M.D., CCHI

Abstract: Lab results are part of almost every medical encounter, yet they are often full of abbreviations, numbers, and jargon that make interpreting challenging. This practical workshop will introduce medical interpreters to the basic purpose of common laboratory tests, including the complete blood count (CBC), basic metabolic panel (BMP), liver function tests, coagulation tests, and HbA1c. We will look at how providers usually talk about “normal” and “abnormal”



results, trends, and “borderline” values, and what they are thinking about when they order or repeat tests.

Special attention will be given to phrases that are easy to misunderstand or mistranslate, such as “your numbers are improving,” “within normal limits,” and “positive” versus “negative” results. Through case examples and short exercises, participants will practice choosing clear, accurate wording in the target language while staying within the interpreter’s role. By the end of the session, interpreters will feel more confident and better prepared for conversations that center on lab results.

Objectives:

1. Identify the purpose of common lab panels such as CBC, basic metabolic panel, liver tests, and HbA1c. Learning Objective 2.
2. Describe in simple, patient-friendly language what high or low values in these tests may mean.
3. Recognize key terms and phrases that providers use when discussing lab results and choose accurate equivalents in the target language.
4. Apply this knowledge to short clinical scenarios to improve accuracy and completeness when interpreting lab-related conversations.

Bio:

Bernardo Alfredo Valencia, MD, is a medical doctor and medical interpreter currently serving as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Valencia earned his Doctor of Medicine degree from Universidad Anáhuac in Mérida, Mexico, and completed a Medical Interpreter Training Program at UMass Chan Medical School. With over four years of dedicated experience in hepatology and liver transplantation, he skillfully combines his medical expertise with linguistic and cultural proficiency, facilitating healthcare communication for Spanish-speaking patients.

Title – How to Work with Me (The Deaf RN!)

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Jonathan Manalang, RN, BSN

Co-presenter: Matt Salerno

Abstract: Designated Interpreters (DI) and Deaf Professionals (DP) have found great success in defining their dynamic through what has become known as the DI/DP model. This necessitates the two have formed a relationship over a period of time where the traditional understanding of an interpreter’s role-space is challenged by the unique demands one faces when functioning in



this capacity. This is further complicated by the systemic barriers healthcare providers with disabilities face working in and navigating the healthcare system.

Objectives:

1. Describe the systemic barriers and pathological discrimination faced by Deaf healthcare professionals in the workplace.
2. Describe the unique complexities of providing interpreting services to a Deaf healthcare professional and their patients.
3. Explain the function of a designated interpreter.
4. Explore tools to evaluate their preparedness to work as an interpreter in this capacity.

Bios:

Jonathan Matthew Balisi Manalang, RN, BSN, is a Deaf nurse with diverse clinical experience in acute care settings. He has worked at Loma Linda University Medical Center in the Cardiology Progressive Care Unit and at UCSF Medical Center in the Medical-Surgical Transitional Care and Oncology/Hematology Units. A University of San Francisco graduate, he is pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing in Nursing Administration at San Francisco State University. Jonathan is dedicated to advocating for Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients, ensuring communication access, and promoting inclusivity in healthcare through his work with sign language interpreters.

Matt Salerno is a hearing American Sign Language-English interpreter with experience working with a host of Deaf professionals across various industries. Originally from Long Island and trained upstate in Rochester, New York he has spent most of his career in the San Francisco. Primarily working as an independent contractor, he founded his agency Matches Interpreting and is a co-founder of the Bay Area Independent Interpreter network in an effort to provide reliable, sustainable access services for his colleagues and community. He currently splits his time between the Bay Area and Tokyo.

Title - Interpreting in Palliative Care: Navigating Language, Culture, and Emotional Burden

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Aigerim Aliakparova

Abstract: Palliative care involves some of the most emotionally complex and ethically sensitive conversations in healthcare, such as discussing prognosis, treatment limitations, goals of care, and end-of-life decisions. When patients and families have limited English proficiency, professional medical interpreters play a critical role in ensuring clear communication, cultural understanding, and compassionate support. However, interpreting in palliative care settings goes beyond word-for-word translation. It requires awareness of cultural beliefs about illness and



death, navigating family dynamics, understanding clinical goals, and managing significant emotional weight.

This interactive workshop will explore the essential role of medical interpreters in palliative and end-of-life care. Participants will gain insight into the nature of palliative care, common communication challenges, and nuanced interpretation techniques needed to accurately and ethically convey sensitive information. Through real case examples, practical scenarios, and reflective discussion, we will address boundaries, advocacy, collaboration with the clinical team, and the impact of cultural expectations on decision-making. The workshop will also offer strategies for coping with the emotional burden of interpreting traumatic or heartbreaking conversations, including self-awareness, debriefing, and institutional support. By the end, participants will be equipped with practical tools to provide high-quality, culturally responsive interpretation while protecting their own well-being.

Objectives:

1. Define the role and goals of palliative care and differentiate it from hospice or curative treatment.
2. Apply strategies for navigating family dynamics, including when the family wants to withhold information or speak on behalf of the patient.
3. Develop coping strategies for emotional burden and moral distress, including self-care techniques, debriefing, and institutional resources.
4. Promote ethical and culturally responsive language access in palliative care through collaboration and advocacy.

Bio:

Aigerim Aliakparova is a Certified medical interpreter, healthcare ethics scholar, and PhD student at Duquesne University. She is a Public Health Researcher and Medical Interpreter with a strong focus on health equity, patient-centered care, and effective health communication. Currently pursuing a PhD in Public Health at Duquesne University, she explores disparities in healthcare access and communication for individuals with limited English proficiency. She is a founder of SPECTRIA LLC—the only nationally recognized interpretation agency specializing in neurodiverse children. She is focused on training medically knowledgeable immigrant professionals and provide culturally responsive services that go beyond translation, supporting equitable and inclusive healthcare experiences. Her academic and professional work is grounded in evidence-based approaches, with a passion for system-level change and advocacy for underrepresented populations. She brings global perspective, interdisciplinary expertise, and a commitment to building bridges between patients, providers, and communities.



Title - Putting medical interpreters in the room where it happens: The Essential Ingredient in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Care

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Jessica Goldhirsch, LICSW, MSW, MPH

Co-presenters: Nina Scott, MSHS, CMI Spanish; Allison Wise, MD; Melad Soliman; Luciana Canestrato, MHA, CMI; and Alexandra Lai-Ying Dobie

Abstract: Medical interpreters are essential participants in the complex tapestry of health care that is both linguistically and culturally responsive to patients. The provision of high-quality healthcare from multiple points of access and across multiple specialties must be carefully designed to meet the needs of patients from other cultures and preferring to speak a language other than English (LOTE). It is becoming increasingly recognized that physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains and other health care clinicians provide more effective care across language and cultural differences when they integrate professional medical interpreters (PMI) into the health care team. However, the manner in which medical interpreters are integrated into healthcare teams is hugely variable across specialties, hospitals, and healthcare systems. Yet, the provision of care from multiple points of access and across multiple specialties including clinical research studies, must be carefully designed to meet the needs of patients from other cultures and preferring to speak a language other than English (LOTE). For comprehensive, truly patient centered care addressing the needs of all of our patients, it is critical to integrate the medical interpreter into both direct patient care teams and into non-clinical spaces, including research/quality improvement, education, program and policy development teams. This multi-disciplinary and culturally diverse panel of professionals from three different Boston teaching hospitals will share their dynamic progressive and status quo-changing work encompassing various hospital-based projects during a dynamic panel discussion.

Objectives:

1. Participants will review culturally and linguistically appropriate care from a broad multi-disciplinary and multi-layered holistic and institutional approach.
2. Participants will recognize the essential value of integrating the medical interpreter into professional development programming, policy development, quality improvement, education, clinical teams, and clinical research studies.
3. Participants will be able to identify various areas of institutional inclusive program planning from multiple professional points of view.
4. Participants will analyze their view of the role of the medical interpreter in health care institutions.



Bios:

Jessica Goldhirsch is a skilled clinician and educator with a seasoned cultural, linguistic, and mental health vision providing psycho-social assessments and targeted interventions with seriously ill patients and their families, as part of a multi-disciplinary palliative care team in an acute care inpatient hospital setting. She is a pioneer in the field of medical interpreting and medical interpreter training, having consistently spoken out about the often-overlooked occupational risk for stress, burnout, and vicarious trauma among health care interpreters. She is also an advocate for the professionalization of medical interpreter training and for rigorous and mentored practicums. She has written and presented nationally on this important concern. Jessica has increased cultural and linguistic access to health care by training hundreds of physicians, managers, nurses, and allied health staff to work more effectively with medical interpreters. Her local, national, and international workshops have covered both the legal and practical aspects of providing cultural and linguistic access to health care by providing continuing education to medical interpreters and translators. She was a groundbreaking health and human sexuality educator of at-risk adolescents and the staff working with them. She developed innovative methods for teaching middle and high school students, juvenile offenders, and both social service and education professionals. As childlife therapist, she created one of the first outdoor pediatric horticulture therapy programs and one of the first inpatient pet therapy programs in the country. Jessica has successfully mediated conflicts between patients and providers, reducing risk and improving patient satisfaction.

Nina Scott, MSHS, CMI-Spanish is Director of Interpreter Services, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, an instructor, and language coach for the Massachusetts Medical Interpreting Training Course at UMass Chan Medical School and board member of the Forum on the Coordination of Interpreter Services. Nina was an instructor for the Medical Interpreting Course at Boston University, Coordinator of Interpreter Services at McLean Hospital and as a medical interpreter at UMass Memorial Medical Center and Shriners Hospital for Children-Boston. Nina has a BA in International Cultures and Economics from Bentley College and an MS in Management in Human Services from the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

Allison Wise, MD, is an Attending Physician with the Pediatric Advanced Care Team (PACT) at Boston Children's Hospital/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and in the Pediatric Intermediate Care Unit (PIMCU) at Boston Children's Hospital. She is an instructor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. One of her passions and areas of academic focus is improving partnership between clinicians and medical interpreters to improve cultural responsiveness and optimize communication with families who speak languages other than English. She is a member of Education subcommittee of the Program for Language Equity at Boston Children's Hospital, focused on improving provider training in working with medical interpreters.



Melad Soliman, CHI, is an Arabic Medical Interpreter and Translator at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, where he supports clinical care, patient education, and interdisciplinary communication. He previously served as a medical interpreter at Boston Children's Hospital, contributing to triage and care coordination. With extensive experience through American Translation Partners and Cross-Cultural Communication Systems, Melad has provided language access across multiple healthcare institutions, including Lahey Clinic, McLean Hospital, Saint Vincent, UMass Memorial, and Boston Medical Center. He is completing his Master of Business Administration with a focus in Management at Fitchburg State University, integrating leadership and healthcare operations into his practice.

Luciana Canestrato, MHA, CMI, is the Director of Language Access at Boston Children's Hospital and a member of the BCH Program for Language Equity, which advances language equity in research, clinical care, and medical education. She also serves on the board of FOCIS (Forum on the Coordinators of Interpreter Services). A medical interpreter by training, Luciana has interpreted in Portuguese and Spanish in hospital settings for several years. She participates in multiple large-scale, institution-wide projects to advance equitable access to care and improve processes. Luciana holds a Master of Healthcare Administration from the Sawyer Business School at Suffolk University.

Alexandra Dobie, LICSW, APHSW-C, is the Director of Supportive Oncology & Health Equity within the Department of Supportive Oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. She is also a former palliative care social worker and Psychosocial Services Director at Boston Medical Center.

Alexandra has had the privilege of working within various cultural contexts and internationally, including with Indigenous populations in western Canada and new immigrant populations. She is particularly interested in examining how structural inequities impact access to and delivery of healthcare. Alexandra emphasizes a framework of cultural humility and anti-racism in her clinical work and in facilitating and teaching workshops.

Title - Using Forum Theater to Practice Ethically Challenging Medical Encounters

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Sara M. Baraldi

Abstract: Interpreting in ethically challenging medical encounters can be overwhelming, yet these situations are an integral part of professional practice. This highly interactive workshop uses Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), specifically Forum Theater, to help medical interpreters actively apply ethical principles, professional standards, and decision-making frameworks to realistic healthcare scenarios.



Grounded in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for healthcare interpreters, participants will explore dilemmas related to role boundaries, advocacy, impartiality, confidentiality, and power dynamics in clinical settings. Through structured scenario-based simulations, participants will be asked to make ethical decisions in real time, step into the action, articulate the reasoning behind their choices, and participate in group discussions.

Using the Forum Theater “tag out” method, participants may pause a scene, replace the interpreter, and attempt a different response. The group then reflects on how each intervention aligns with ethical principles such as communicative autonomy, professionalism, and patient-centered care. This process allows interpreters to experiment with when to step in, when to step back, and how to advocate appropriately while maintaining ethical boundaries. To recap, participants actively intervene in scenarios, propose ethical responses, and discuss how each aligns with professional standards.

The workshop also incorporates brief vocal, breath, and grounding exercises at the beginning to support emotional regulation during high-stakes encounters. The session concludes with a facilitated talkback to consolidate learning, connect experiences to ethical frameworks, and identify strategies participants can apply immediately in their daily work.

Objectives:

1. Apply the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice to ethically challenging medical interpreting scenarios involving power imbalances, role boundaries, and advocacy.
2. Analyze and respond to ethical dilemmas using structured decision-making frameworks, explaining the reasoning behind their choices.
3. Practice ethical interventions through scenario-based roleplay and Forum Theater techniques, including determining when to step in, when to step back, and how to maintain impartiality.
4. Reflect on peer perspectives during facilitated group discussion to strengthen professional judgment and ethical confidence in real-world encounters.

Bio:

Sara M. Baraldi is a certified medical interpreter with a unique background in educational theater. She is a dynamic and passionate educational professional with experience in educational theatre, multicultural arts, medical interpretation, and mask & puppetry confection and manipulation. She has a strong commitment to teaching and engagement, particularly within



diverse communities. She has over 15 years of dedicated experience nurturing and educating children, including those with special needs. She has a unique background, bringing a blend of creativity, empathy, and educational rigor to any position. She is fluent in English & Spanish.

Lunch & Networking 12:30 - 2:00pm

Session 3: 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm (90 minutes / 1.5 hour session)

Title - From Principles to Practice: Bringing the Revised National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care to Life

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Jane Kontrimas

Co-presenters: Maria-Paz Beltran Avery, PhD; Analia Lang

Abstract: Join us to hear about the revision process for the National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care. Interpreters shared how they implemented the National Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and commented on the applicability of various standards. They reflected on their experiences, their understanding of their responsibilities, and the growth of remote interpreting. Hear about the new concepts and perspectives introduced to the Code after analyzing the national data. Discuss and analyze real scenarios with colleagues using an outcome-based approach.

Objectives:

1. Recognize the connections between the values, principles, and standards of our profession.
2. Describe what makes healthcare interpreting a practice profession.
3. Grasp how an outcome-based approach allows professionals to make useful ethical decisions.
4. Practice applying an outcome-based approach to case scenarios.

Bios:

Jane Crandall Kontrimas, CoreCHI™, M.S. was a Russian Interpreter at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center since 1979. In 1985 she cohosted the first interpreter meeting that became the MMIA (Massachusetts Medical Interpreter Association), now called the IMIA. She chaired the MMIA Standards of Practice committee developing “Standards of Practice for Medical Interpreters” @ <https://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/102.pdf>. She has been interested in ethics and standards ever since and currently chairs the National Standards of Practice



Workgroup of the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare. She received the 2016 Paving the Way Tony Windsor Award.

Maria-Paz Beltran Avery, PhD, began working on healthcare interpreting early in 1990, directing a federally funded project to develop a college level certificate program training bilingual adult as healthcare interpreters. Through this project, she collaborated with the Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association creating the Medical Interpreting Standards of Practice (1995). She joined the NCIHC Standards, Training, and Certification Committee (STC) and contributed to the National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care, the National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care and the National Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs. She was the 2015 NCIHC's Language Access Champion.

Analia Lang acquired her BA from Indiana University with a concentration in training, development, and communications. She worked at a hospital as a healthcare interpreter for over 12 years and has performed VRI and OPI interpretation. At the present time, Analia works for Cross-Cultural Communications LLC as a Manager, Training & Curriculum. During her training tenure, she has developed webinars, workshops, modules, and training curricula. Presently, she serves at the NCIHC Standards in Training committee and as a co-chair in its sub work group National Standards of Practice.

Title - Interpreter (In) Visibility in the Age of AI

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Esther Bonin

Co-presenter: Stephanie A. Rodríguez

Abstract: In the age of AI adoption and integration, this workshop examines how the role and visibility of a healthcare interpreter are shifting. According to recent industry reports (GALA, 2025; Slator, 2025), although AI use in the practice of interpreting is increasing, qualified human interpreters remain central to the standard of quality care in bilingual healthcare communication. As healthcare systems explore the possibilities and limitations of AI tools, the workshop foregrounds the implications of the “(in)visible” interpreter present-day (Giustini, 2024).

Positioned within a sociological framework, the session not only addresses tool performance but also role dynamics, agency, inequality, and professional identity in workplaces that are increasing digitalization through platforms, remote work, and algorithmic systems (Monzó-Nebot & Dastyar, 2025). Moreover, within this framework, the multiple roles interpreters routinely undertake such as mediator, patient advocate, institutional navigator, healthcare ambassador, and conversation partner will be examined while highlighting empirical evidence that much interpreter work occurs



outside the consultation room, in the broader ecology of healthcare provision (Álvaro Aranda, 2021).

Furthermore, the workshop will trace the evolution of “invisibility” in interpreting and translation studies (Angelelli, 2001) and consider how the current technological turn calls for critical reflection, ethical governance, and sociological awareness. The aim is to map current curricular and institutional pathways, identify gaps in policy and assessment, and propose actionable routes for research, program design, and interprofessional collaboration between interpreters, administrators, and clinicians.

Objectives:

1. Examine the evolving role and visibility of healthcare interpreters.
2. Discuss the advantages and limitations of AI tools in healthcare interpreting.
3. Explore Strategies for interprofessional collaboration between interpreters, administrators, and clinicians.
4. Reflect on interpreter agency, equity, and professional recognition within increasing digital environments.

Bios:

Esther Bonin is an international language industry expert with over 20 years of experience. She holds a degree in Translation & Interpreting and an MA in International Relations. Esther has worked on both sides of the Atlantic as a translator & interpreter, university professor, and language access consultant. She managed a team of over 75 interpreters for a large Massachusetts hospital system before joining several language companies in leadership positions. Currently, she’s responsible for Strategic Partnerships at Propio. Esther is passionate about increasing equity through language access, elevating the interpreter profession, and bridging the gap between interpreting programs and language companies.

Stephanie A. Rodríguez is an Assistant Professor (Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies), and Director of Lives in Translation (LiT) at Rutgers University in Newark. Rodríguez coordinates community-based initiatives centered on critical civil engagement. She trains translation and interpreting students through experiential learning to prepare for national certifications. Her research on translation and language use ranges from the study of efficacy, quality, and perception of machine translation to the development of translation pedagogy, the study of bilingual language development and language access advocacy. She’s experience as a court interpreter, translator in medical and legal domains, documentary subtitler, and AI translation quality consultant.



Title - Precision in Practice: Gaining Clarity on Common Medical Misconceptions and Confusing Terminology

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Lisa Walker, PA-C

Abstract: This presentation will identify commonly misunderstood medical concepts and terms. The session will incorporate clear explanations and validated medical evidence to dispel myths and clarify terms that may cause confusion for both patients and interpreters. Active participation by those in attendance will be encouraged in identifying real life encounters where confusion or inaccurate beliefs impacted interpretation and, potentially, patient outcomes. The session will conclude with an opportunity to identify strategies for addressing these communication conundrums in real time.

Objectives:

1. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will identify common medical terms that are frequently misunderstood.
2. Accurately define commonly confused medical terms.
3. Correct common misconceptions regarding causes of medical ailments, prevention of disease, and treatments.
4. Create a plan for addressing patient-interpreter-clinician miscommunication in a medical encounter.

Bio:

Lisa K. Walker, MPAS, PA-C, graduated with an AS in Interpreting for the Deaf and worked for several years as a medical interpreter before going on to become a Physician Assistant (PA) and educator, working in family medicine and, for the past 28 years, teaching the next generation of PAs. She has been the founding director of three PA programs including her current role with the developing program at Endicott College. As a long-time advocate of language access, Lisa has designed medical interpreting curricula and presented regionally and nationally on a wide range of topics for interpreters and health professionals.

Title - "Reading the room" ... and addressing it!

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Tatiana González-Cestari, PhD, CHI-Spanish

Co-presenter: Cristina Rosario

Abstract: Have you ever joined a call with your best smile, ready to help those who need you as interpreter, only to find out you are about to interpret for a person who just went through a



devastating miscarriage? Have you ever entered a hospital room with eight people who want to talk at the same time because they all want to voice their opinion about what the patient who has been recently diagnosed with cancer should do for treatment? This interactive, skill building session with multi-specialty healthcare examples that apply to onsite and remote interpreters will lead participants into how to determine, understand or be sensitive to the mood or situation happening in an interpreted session. In addition, we will guide participants through how to address the corresponding situations using problem solving and assertiveness skills as well as certain protocols in interpreting. Participants will practice with live examples and audio exercises to effectively apply those skills and protocols in interpreting.

Objectives:

1. To practice ways to determine early in the interpreted session what is happening in “the room.”
2. To practice sensitivity when “reading the room” throughout the interpreted session.
3. To practice how to address some situations, after “reading the room,” by applying common protocols to different live interpreting scenarios.
4. To practice how to address some situations, after “reading the room,” by applying common skills to different live interpreting scenarios.

Bios:

Tatiana González-Cestari, PhD, CHI-Spanish has 23 years of combined experience as a pharmacologist, researcher, professor, leader, and remote interpreter. She is the Director of Language Service Advocacy at Equiti where she focuses on hospitals’ language access best practices and impact on quality, compliance, and financial metrics. Tatiana is part of the NCIHC Policy, Education and Research Committee and co-author of The Remote Interpreter textbook. Tatiana has mentored, developed training, presented at national and international events, published peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles, and lectured at various universities. Tatiana obtained her pharmacy degree and her Ph.D. in pharmacology from Universidad Central de Venezuela.

Cristina Rosario holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Science from Universidad de Puerto Rico. She began her career in 2009 as an over-the-phone Spanish interpreter. Initially, she worked as a Customer Service Interpreter for a variety of agencies before moving on to more complex situations, including court hearings and medical evaluations. Cristina joined Martti as a Video Medical Interpreter in 2018, transitioned to being a Quality Assurance Specialist in the Interpreting Quality & Training department, and now serves as the Training Manager at Equiti. Cristina has trained, monitored, and coached remote interpreters across diverse language pairs worldwide.



Title - Understanding Your Strengths—Leading Interpreting Sessions from Within

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Shirley X. Moore, MS

Abstract: In an era where interpreters are navigating increasingly complex medical encounters, whether in-person, remote, or hybrid, technical skill alone is not enough. True excellence begins with self-awareness. This session invites interpreters to explore how understanding their unique strengths can transform the quality of their interpreting sessions and enhance patient-provider communication.

Participants will learn how to identify their professional and interpersonal strengths using a simple reflective framework that integrates mindset, communication style, and professional boundaries. Through real-life scenarios and interactive activities, we will explore how self-awareness improves neutrality, supports emotional regulation, and strengthens trust. Three critical components of the “human connection” essential to medical interpreting.

This workshop also addresses how interpreters can apply their strengths to lead “up, down, and across”—positively influencing the interpreting dynamic with providers, clients, and colleagues. Whether serving in person or through a screen, participants will leave with practical tools to build confidence, foster collaboration, and show up as the best version of themselves in every encounter.

Objectives:

1. Identify their top three professional strengths and describe how these impact their interpreting performance.
2. Apply self-awareness strategies to enhance communication and manage stress during medical encounters.
3. Recognize how strengths-based leadership principles can be used to improve team and provider interactions across modalities.
4. Cultivate habits that promote interpreter wellness and relational trust with patients and providers.

Bio:

Shirley X. Moore is a visionary entrepreneur, dynamic speaker, and dedicated advocate for equitable language access and justice. Her passion for breaking down language barriers led her to establish Be Moore Interpreting in 2016, a Latina-owned, boutique language services provider based in Pawtucket, RI. Under her leadership, Be Moore Interpreting has flourished, providing high-quality interpreting and translation services in over 17 languages to a diverse clientele that includes educational institutions, healthcare organizations, and local government agencies. Shirley’s commitment to language equity is evident through her innovative approaches to interpreting and training, and her tireless efforts to advocate for underrepresented communities.



Her firm's success has been recognized through multiple awards, including the Empowered Women Business of the Year Award (2021) and the Providence Business News Business Women Award (2023). Additionally, Be Moore Interpreting is the only Rhode Island-based company licensed to offer the Bridging the Gap 40-hour Medical Interpreter Training, expanding the scope of professional language services and training available in the region. Shirley is also a seasoned trainer and leadership coach who has impacted over 3,000 women globally through entrepreneurial training programs. She is passionate about helping women entrepreneurs identify and harness their strengths to achieve sustainable success. As the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Lead Facilitator at the Mini Kids Entrepreneur Fair of RI, Shirley provides critical support to budding entrepreneurs, advocating for policies that enhance language access and economic empowerment for minority-owned businesses. In addition to her professional achievements, Shirley and her husband Ramel are the pastors of Fortified Life Church in Providence, where they serve their community through ministry and support. Shirley holds a Bachelor's in Human Services and a Master's in Organizational Management & Leadership, further underpinning her expertise in community engagement and organizational development. Shirley X. Moore's unwavering dedication to her craft, her community, and her faith makes her a prominent figure in Rhode Island's business landscape and a beacon of inspiration for entrepreneurs and leaders nationwide.



Session 4: 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm (60 minutes / 1 hour session)

Title - Bridging Language and Culture to Improve Donation and Transplantation Access

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Ingrid Palacios

Abstract: Equitable access to organ donation and transplantation continues to be shaped by cultural beliefs, linguistic and societal barriers, and community trust. Medical interpreters and culturally responsive communication professionals play a critical role in closing these gaps, yet their impact is often underrecognized in donation, transplant, and hospital systems. This presentation will examine how diverse linguistic outreach, culturally tailored education, and interpreter supported communication can strengthen relationships with multicultural communities and improve understanding of their impact in the donation process. Drawing on real world program insights, data trends, and community-based strategies, the session will highlight practical approaches for increasing engagement, dispelling myths, and supporting informed decision-making across languages and cultures. Participants will gain actionable tools to enhance cross-cultural communication, foster equity, and help ensure that all patients, regardless of language or cultural backgrounds have meaningful access to donation and transplantation opportunities. The study aims to analyze this phenomenon to raise awareness to the relevance of culturally appropriate healthcare access for a diverse patient's community.

Objectives:

1. Identify key cultural and linguistic barriers that affect equitable access to organ donation and transplantation within diverse communities.
2. Explain the critical role medical interpreters play in facilitating informed decision-making and building trust in donation and transplant conversations.
3. Apply culturally responsive communication strategies and multilingual outreach approaches to improve engagement and understanding in underserved populations.
4. Develop practical action steps to strengthen language-access practices within donation and transplantation programs to reduce disparities and enhance patient outcomes.

Bio:

Ingrid Palacios has dedicated 15 years to advancing the mission of saving and healing lives through organ and tissue donation. She is the Multicultural Community Outreach Program Manager at New England Donor Services, developing culturally intelligent programs and bilingual education to increase donation access across diverse communities. Ingrid is a founding member of NEDS' Social Equity Steering Committee and a national leader in DEIB initiatives at AOPO, The Alliance, and AMAT. A graduate of Universidad Central de Venezuela with training from Cornell



University, she brings over 20 years of multicultural community advocacy and a strong commitment to reducing health disparities.

Title – Building Sustainable Emotional Support for Interpreters: Lessons from a Palliative Care Facilitated Debriefing Initiative

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Allison Wise, MD

Co-presenters: Elenor Frechette, MSW, LICSW, APHSW; Luciana Canestraro, MHA, CMI; Juliana Cardona Berrio, CHI

Abstract: Medical interpreters can experience high levels of distress in their daily work and are at high risk for vicarious trauma. (1) Medical interpreters identify the emotional burden of their work as being underrecognized and under-supported by clinical teams and healthcare systems, and have advocated for a space to debrief emotionally charged encounters and learn coping skills to enhance resilience. (2) Palliative care clinicians are well-positioned to respond to and address the emotional burden of interpreters given our communication expertise, shared clinical experiences, and interdisciplinary approach. A partnership between palliative care and interpreter services can help to address this gap in support, ensuring interpreters receive the emotional and coping resources they need to continue their essential work.

In collaboration with Language Services Leadership at Boston Children's Hospital, we conducted a needs assessment survey of medical interpreters and developed and piloted a bi-monthly structured debriefing program for interpreters. The aims of this program were to: 1) provide a safe space for processing emotions related to challenging encounters, 2) foster connectedness through storytelling, and 3) share concrete coping skills. Preliminary qualitative feedback indicates that interpreters find the sessions helpful for emotional processing and effective in increasing their sense of connectedness.

This presentation will describe the: 1) sources of emotional distress experienced by medical interpreters in their daily work 2) process of development of the debriefing program based on both existing literature and a needs assessment survey of interpreters, 3) tangible tools for participants interested in developing similar programs at their institutions, and 4) lessons learned from 24 months of debriefing sessions.

Supporting the wellbeing of medical interpreters is essential to providing high-quality, culturally responsive clinical care. Ensuring language accessibility and high-quality communication for patients and families who speak languages other than English depends on the resilience and sustainability of the interpreters who make these connections possible.



References:

- 1) Lai M, Heydon G, Mulayim S. Vicarious trauma among interpreters. *Int J Interpret Educ*. 2015; 7:3-22.
- 2) Lim PS, Olen A, Carballido JK, et al. "We need a little help": a qualitative study on distress and coping among pediatric medical interpreters. *Journal of Hospital Management and Health Policy*. 2022;6(0).

Objectives:

1. Participants will recognize sources of emotional distress in medical interpreting.
2. With enhanced understanding of the sources of distress in medical interpreting, participants will be able to list concrete strategies to augment support and address the emotional burden of interpreters.
3. Participants will define a step-by-step approach for designing and implementing a clinician-facilitated debriefing program within an interpreter services team.
4. Participants will draw on lessons, themes, and successes from two years of facilitated debriefing sessions to inform best practices at their own institutions.

Bios:

Allison Wise, MD is a pediatrician based in Boston, MA. She is affiliated with Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Wise is known for her expertise in pediatric hematology and oncology, and she is a member of the American Board of Pediatrics. She received the Best Children's Honor Roll Fellowship in 2022-2023 and completed her residency in Pediatrics in 2016-2019. Dr. Wise is also involved in research and has published several abstracts in medical journals.

Elenor "Ellie" Frechette, MSW, LICSW, APHSW is a graduate of the Harvard Interprofessional Palliative Care Fellowship and earned her Master of Science in Social Work from Columbia University, where she focused her studies on hospice and end-of-life care. On PACT, Ellie specializes in providing bereavement care to parents, caregivers, and siblings who have lost a child with medical complexity. Ellie's professional interests include enhancing holistic and culturally sensitive bereavement care, including integrating the arts into creative bereavement programming.

Luciana Canestraro, MHA, CMI is the Director of Language Access at Boston Children's Hospital and a member of the BCH Program for Language Equity, which advances language equity in research, clinical care, and medical education. She also serves on the board of FOCIS (Forum on the Coordinators of Interpreter Services). A medical interpreter by training, Luciana has interpreted in Portuguese and Spanish in hospital settings for several years. She is involved in multiple large-scale, institution-wide projects aimed at advancing equitable access to care and improving processes. Luciana holds a Master of Healthcare Administration from the Sawyer Business School at Suffolk University.



Juliana Cardona Berrio, CHI is a bicultural Spanish–English simultaneous interpreter with 15+ years of experience serving and advocating for the Hispanic community. Nationally certified healthcare interpreter (CHI™), licensed interpreter trainer, and psychology student dedicated to advancing equity, empathy, and culturally responsive care in healthcare and community settings.

Title - Cognitive Skills: The "How" of Interpreting

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Vonessa Costa, CoreCHI-Performance

Co-presenter: Alegna Zavatti, CHI-Spanish

Abstract: Your language skills are what people hear, but your cognitive skills are what you find when you pull back the curtain. While you listen, remember, process, decide, and self-correct (at lightning speed!) as you interpret, your brain is doing the real heavy lifting. These mental superpowers are what separate good interpreting from great interpreting.

The Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) has spent more than a decade studying interpreter performance. In 2023, CCHI took this work to a new level by asking a different question: how do interpreters think while they do it? This led to a groundbreaking study, which identified the mental skills that support competent interpreting across all languages and led to the development of the first-ever monolingual performance exam for interpreters of all languages.

Come experience it yourself! Join us for interactive cognitive exercises that give your linguistic skills a rest while strengthening your interpreting mind.

Objectives:

1. Describe what cognitive skills are and how they support interpreting.
2. Differentiate cognitive skills from language or interpreting techniques.
3. Practice cognitive skills via interactive exercises.
4. Identify how strengthening specific cognitive skills can improve overall interpreting performance across diverse scenarios.

Bios:

Vonessa Costa is the Operations Manager of Medical Interpretation and Translation at Children's Hospital Colorado and Vice Chair of the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI). Previously, she directed language access at Cambridge Health Alliance and led the Cross-Cultural Communication Institute at CCCS, Inc. Vonessa holds a CoreCHI-Performance™ credential, served as secretary of the Forum on the Coordination of Interpreter Services, and participated on the America's Essential Hospitals Education Committee. She graduated from the



America's Essential Hospitals Fellows Program and received the 2019 MassAHEC Tony Windsor Award for her advocacy in language access and the professionalization of healthcare interpreters.

Alegna Zavatti, CHI-Spanish is the Director of Interpreter Services at Boston Medical Center, where she manages and oversees interpreter and translation operations. She graduated from Universidad Central de Venezuela with a bachelor's degree in Translation and Conference Interpretation and completed Boston University's Medical, Legal and Community Interpreting Certificate program. She is a board member of the Forum on the Coordination of Interpreter Services (FOCIS), an organization that aims at creating best practices for interpreter services departments and enhance language access and is a Commissioner with the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI).

Title - Interpreting in Mental Health: Adolescent-Centered Family Therapy (SPANISH ONLY)

CEUs: Pending

Language Specific: Spanish

Presenter: Jillian Droste

Abstract: Children of immigrant families are more likely to experience hardships and trauma that lead to even higher rates of mental health issues than those already seen in adolescents today. Often, multilingual families also face greater barriers to therapeutic services. Interpreters have the ability to help bridge this gap in care, but interpreting in mental health settings comes with unique challenges. This presentation will introduce Spanish interpreters to the unique needs of families and mental health providers engaging in counseling or talk therapy. With a discussion on the growing need for this support, a look at how these encounters differ from the more familiar physical health appointments, and a comprehensive review of relevant terminology, interpreters will leave this presentation with the clarity needed to approach their next adolescent therapy appointment with confidence.

Objectives:

1. Describe how the growing need for adolescent mental health services implies a greater need for interpreters in these settings.
2. Explain the ways in which the encounter may look similar to or different from a physical health visit and what this means for the interpreter.
3. Review the most common mental health diagnoses in the adolescent population.
4. Apply mental health terminology encountered in adolescent and family therapy settings.

Bio:

Jillian Droste, is a certified Spanish-English interpreter and translator with an M.A. in Translation and Interpreting from the University of Illinois. As an interpreter, she renders spoken Spanish



into English (and vice versa) for a Level 1 Trauma Center. As a translator, she renders written Spanish into English for the medical, marketing, and academic sectors with an increasing focus in medical translation. She is Certified by the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters in 2019. She highly values the ongoing professionalization of interpreting services and strives to constantly improve her skills through education and community engagement whenever possible. When not translating or interpreting, she can be found snuggling with her adorable dogs or working in the garden.

Title - Medical Encounters with Patients Who Refuse Blood and Blood Products, What Are the Alternatives, What To Expect, and the Terminology

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Aracely Lopez, CHI™-Spanish, TCII® Language Interpreter

Abstract: Many people refuse blood transfusions and blood products every day for religious, ethical, personal and health reasons. While staying away from prejudice and biased points of view, being equipped with reasons, terminology, and alternatives all while knowing what to expect will help the interpreter navigate this encounter the best way possible. It will help have the encounter run smoothly, have a better flow while bridging the gap between both provider and patient seamlessly. My presentation will include what to expect, reasons, alternatives, and terminology.

Objectives:

1. Describe why do people refuse blood transfusions and blood products.
2. Explain what to expect while in an encounter.
3. Explore what the alternatives are.
4. Review what terminology we should familiarize ourselves with as interpreters.

Bio:

Aracely López, CHI™-Spanish, TCII® is a Staff Interpreter at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. A former child interpreter and first-generation daughter of immigrants, she brings both lived experience and more than 20 years of professional interpreting practice across government, medical, legal, educational, and community settings. Aracely is licensed to teach, coach, and train interpreters. She is passionate about ethical practice, professional standards, and empowering the next generation of interpreters.



Workshop Descriptions, Objectives, and Bios

Day 2 - May 16, 2026

Session 1 - Keynote presentation 9:15 am - 10:15 am (60 minutes / 1 hour session)

Title – Human Connection in Healthcare: Why Medical Interpreters Matter More Than Ever

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Olga Valdman, MD

Abstract: Medical Interpreters play a key role in healthcare, ensuring patients receive accurate medical information and a medical error is avoided. The cost of not having high quality interpretation in medical visits is dire, in both health outcomes and economic impact. In person interpretation is particularly powerful. But what makes interpreters different from high quality AI machines? During the session we will explore the importance of human connection, contextualization of conversation and additionally discuss opportunities medical interpreters have beyond interpretation such as cultural navigation, advocacy, and provider education.

Objectives:

1. Review the critical role interpreters play in healthcare.
2. Understand the impact of human connection on accuracy and quality of patient-provider interaction when supported by in-person interpreter.
3. Discuss potential roles medical interpreters can play in advocacy, client support, and provider education.

Bio:

Dr. Olga Valdman is the Founder and Executive Director of Worcester RISE for Health and an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School (UMass). She practices Family Medicine with obstetrics and is passionate about caring for families and attending births.

Dedicated to serving vulnerable populations both locally and globally, Dr. Valdman's work with Worcester's refugee community began during medical school when she co-founded the African Community Education (ACE) program alongside Kaska Yawo. ACE, a non-profit supporting African refugee and immigrant youth and families in achieving educational success and socio-economic stability through access to academic support, leadership development, cultural expression, and community outreach.



After completing her residency at Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Dr. Valdman returned to Worcester, drawn by her deep connection with ACE and the city’s refugee and immigrant populations. She joined the Family Health Center of Worcester (FHCW), where she spent a decade strengthening refugee health programs. In December 2022, Dr. Valdman left FHCW to launch Worcester RISE for Health, believing that effective refugee and immigrant care must be community-based and co-located with other community-based organizations.

At UMass, Dr. Valdman serves as Director of Global Health Programs in the Family Medicine department. She has built and sustained international partnerships in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Liberia, Kenya, and Ghana. With a \$1.5 million USAID grant, her team collaborated with colleagues in Liberia to establish the country’s first Family Medicine Residency training program. She also recently helped launch a Spanish language training program for Family Medicine residents, ensuring graduates achieve fluency and gain a deep understanding of Worcester’s Latinx communities. Dr. Valdman also serves as the advisor to several student groups at UMass Chan. Nationally, Dr. Valdman is a member of the Society for Refugee Health Providers, presented at multiple conferences on topics of refugee health, global health, and border health, and is a recipient of a number of awards and recognitions.

Session 2: 10:45 am – 12:15 pm (90 minutes / 1.5 hour session)

Title – Bridging Gaps in Medical Access: Perspectives as a Deaf Coordinator, Patient, and Parent

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Jessica Hutchins

Abstract: This interactive session explores how communication access in medical settings can be strengthened through collaboration between interpreters, coordinators, and Deaf patients and families. Drawing on real-world coordination experience and personal lived experiences as a Deaf parent, this session highlights what meaningful access truly looks like — before, during, and after appointments.

Objectives:

1. Identify best practices for sharing information between interpreters, coordinators, and medical providers while maintaining professional boundaries and confidentiality.
2. Explain how effective warm handoffs and communication flow enhance continuity of care for Deaf patients and families.
3. Recognize the unique interpreting considerations and emotional dynamics present in OB, pediatric, and family-centered medical settings.
4. Apply culturally responsive strategies that center the Deaf experience and promote equitable access throughout the entire care journey.



Bio:

Jessica Hutchins is a Senior Program Manager for Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services, where Jessica guides sustainable growth in community interpreting across the country. Working within a Deaf-led, interpreter-centered organization, Jessica focuses on strengthening access, building relationships with local communities, and expanding equitable interpreting services.

As a Deaf professional who grew up mainstreamed and has navigated medical systems with interpreters throughout her life, Jessica brings firsthand insight into the gaps and barriers of Deaf patients' experience. She is also a Deaf mother to three KODAs — ages 18, 15, and almost 3 — and is married to a CODA, giving her a unique family-based perspective on communication, advocacy, and access in healthcare settings.

When she's not coordinating programs or busy with three kids, Jessica enjoys attempting to read a book in peace and loves to run.

Title – Decoding Lab Results for Medical Interpreters

See Day 1, Session 2 for abstract, objectives, and presenter bio.

Title – From Principles to Practice: Bringing the Revised National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care to Life

See Day 1, Session 3 for abstract, objectives, and presenter bio.

Title - Operationalizing Language Access: Structure, Strategy, and Human Centered Care

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Debbie Lesser

Abstract: Ensuring equitable care for patients with language barriers requires more than individual interpreter skill—it demands a thoughtfully designed, well-governed, and operationally sound Language Access program. This session presents a practical, system-level model for structuring, staffing, and integrating language access services across a large healthcare system, emphasizing alignment with regulatory requirements, patient safety goals, and organizational strategy. Using real-world examples, the session illustrates how coordinated workflows, interpreter modalities, technology integration, and the Qualified Bilingual Staff (QBS) program collectively support human connection, clinical clarity, and safe, high-quality care. Participants will gain actionable insights for strengthening or redesigning language access infrastructure within their own organizations.

Objectives:



1. Participants will be able to describe key operational and administrative components of a systemwide language access program, including governance, workflows, staffing models, and modality selection.
2. Participants will be able to identify how structured language access services improve patient safety, communication accuracy, and human connection across diverse medical settings and modalities.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate the role of technology, data, and performance metrics in managing and continuously improving language access services.
4. Participants will be able to apply practical strategies for integrating interpreters, translators, and Qualified Bilingual Staff (QBS) into clinical operations to meet regulatory requirements and support high-quality, patient-centered care.

Bio:

Debbie Lesser, M.S., CI/CT, QMHI, CoreCHI, HUB-CMI is a Management Adjunct Professor, Public Speaker, American Sign Language Interpreter with expertise in Medical Interpreting, Video Remote Interpreting, and project Management. She learned sign language from the Deaf communities in the New England area and have been a certified sign language interpreter since 1999. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology with a focus in crisis intervention from Florida State University and a master's degree in healthcare interpreting from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID). She also holds a certification as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter (QMHI) and is a Supervision Leader with the Interpreting Institute for Reflection-in-Action & Supervision (IIRAS). Much of her training and continuing education in medical environments has been in the areas of oncology, genetics, mental health, and domestic violence. In addition to her graduate degree, she has also completed a 9-month intensive healthcare interpreting program for ASL interpreters (CHI) also at RIT/NTID. She has worked in the video interpreting industry since 2008 and managed interpreters remotely for most of that time. She gained an appreciation for the medical field as an interpreter for and Director of ASL Services with a national company specializing in healthcare interpreting and is currently both a freelance medical interpreter and Director of Language Access Services for a large healthcare system in Atlanta, GA. She is also an adjunct professor in the American Sign Language Interpreter Education (ASLIE) program at RIT. She is deeply grateful for the cultural and linguistic knowledge she has gained from being a part of the Deaf community and continuously strives to improve the standard of medical interpreting services, not only for Deaf and hard-of-hearing patients but also for patients with limited English proficiency. In addition, she is proud to be an adjunct professor in the ASLIE program at NTID/RIT and a volunteer Peer Navigator for FORCE - Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered.



Title – Understanding Your Strengths—Leading Interpreting Sessions from Within

See Day 1, Session 3 for abstract, objectives, and presenter bio.

Title – Using Forum Theater to Practice Ethically Challenging Medical Encounters

See Day 1, Session 2 for abstract, objectives, and presenter bio.

Session 3: 1:45 pm– 2:45 pm (60 minutes / 1 hour session)

Title – Improving interpreter training with the implementation of Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practices™

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Desiree A. Díaz

Co-presenter: Rubén Díaz, MAT, CMI-Spanish

Abstract: Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) healthcare simulation-based scenarios are on the rise; however, linguistic diversity is often missed (Díaz et al., 2022). The national Cultural, Linguistic Appropriate Services Standards (CLAS) are free to use and easily adapted into an immersive simulation environment. The possibilities for interpreter education and training are endless. Communication is often the leading factor of health equity. Improved strategies to practice and evaluate practices of the unique skills required of interpreters are essential in the improvement and elimination of linguistic bias and discrepancies. Skills are needed to improve the appropriate delivery of healthcare and increase health literacy. This session will demonstrate the relevance of including Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ (HSSOBPTM) to include CLAS standards in simulation-based education (SBE). A discussion of the application of simulation to enhance interpreter training will be modeled in the creation of complex scenarios. Active participation will enhance instruction and empower participants, which will provide a lasting impact. The outcomes of this session can be applied immediately in any interpreter training with minor adjustments. Improvement of health equity begins with educating the learner of their potential role as a social justice advocate. Healthcare outcomes should not be based on the linguistic ability of a client, interpreter, or educator, as we all have the opportunity to change the narrative.

Objectives:

1. Learners will define the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practices (HSSOBP) and be able to apply one standard into interpreter simulation-based education.
2. Learners will create a CLAS scenario outline that follows the Simulation Standards of Best Practice (HSSOBP) that explores linguistic considerations.



3. Learners will construct two strategies to facilitate a monolingual debrief looking at multi-lingual scenario.
4. Learners will compare and contrast different types of experiential learning with interpreter training.

Bios:

Desiree Díaz has focused her career and research on simulation. Her research, which has been widely published and presented, combines the cutting-edge technology of simulation with the deeper human emotion of empathy to train health care providers to more effectively care for vulnerable and underserved patient populations, including correctional health care, Non-English Language Preference (NELP) patients and transgender patients. In addition, she is past President of International Nursing Association of Clinical Simulation and Learning. She is a tri fellow in the Academies of Nursing, Nursing Education, and Society for Simulation in Healthcare. Díaz is a certified nurse educator and one of the first advanced simulation-certified faculty worldwide. In her career, she has been known as a pioneer in healthcare Disparity work in the area of simulation-based education. She has led global groups in clinical and simulated activities in Peru, Bahamas, Cape Town, SA, and Puerto Rico. Dr. Diaz is currently a Professor and Assistant Dean at Vanderbilt School of Nursing

Rubén Díaz, MAT, CMI-Spanish, is the founder of an interpreter and translation company, TITUS Language and Educational Services. He serves as an adjunct university professor, facilitating study abroad to Spanish-speaking countries, and is a full-time High School Spanish educator. In addition to his degrees, Rubén holds a graduate certificate in Hispanic Serving Healthcare Professionals. He has served as a linguist in the United States Navy for approximately a decade and is also a certified judicial court interpreter. He has over two decades of professional interpreter and translation experience with additional training for private and public hospitals, clinics, and interprofessional education.

Title – NoSharedLanguage.com: An AI Simulation for Teaching Medical Professionals

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Andy Schwieter

Abstract: We have created a 5-minute, self-paced AI-powered chat simulation that immerses clinicians in the experience of seeking care without language support. This interactive tool fosters empathy and highlights the critical role of interpreters, making clinicians more likely to engage language services in practice. Co-designed with community partners, the intervention aligns with national priorities for equitable care and offers a scalable, technology-driven approach to improving access, experience, and outcomes across diverse populations. It was created in



RISEUP, an AHRQ-funded initiative addressing health equity gaps by integrating medical and social care.

Objectives:

1. Name three common barriers to interpreter utilization in clinical settings.
2. Explain the importance of microlearning and mindset shifts in professional education.
3. Describe how immersive AI simulations can influence clinician behavior toward equitable care.
4. Find ways to train clinicians better in their own organizations using empathy-driven, technology-enabled approaches.

Bio:

Andy Schwieter leads healthcare language access at Cincinnati Children's and nationally as Vice President of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) and Chair of the Policy, Education, and Research Committee.

Since 2006, Andy has practiced Spanish interpretation, certified by the Supreme Court of Ohio and the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters. He co-authored research in Hospital Pediatrics on improving care for families using languages other than English.

Andy's leadership combines national policy development with practical implementation, ensuring healthcare interpreting and translation standards evolve to provide excellent care to all patients.

Title - Overcoming Burnout: Keeping Safe and Sane

Presenter: Nellie O. Cordova, CMI-Spanish

Abstract: Burnout among medical interpreters is a growing concern, driven by high emotional demands, complex clinical encounters, and the unique pressures of facilitating communication in critical moments of care. Participants will gain insight into common risk factors, early warning signs, and the ways in which occupational stress intersects with interpreter role boundaries. The session will also highlight evidence-based strategies for resilience, self-care, and professional sustainability. Attendees will leave with practical tools, organizational resources, and reassurance that burnout is both understandable and preventable—with support systems available at individual, team, and institutional levels to promote long-term well-being.

Objectives:

1. Inform the professional medical interpreter of identifying signs when one may be entering the BURNOUT stage in their workplace.
2. Analyze different methods and treatments to keep safe and sane during BURNOUT.
3. Demonstrate the trust and confidence that, like any other medical professional, interpreters also have the right to assistance if one reaches the BURNOUT stage.



4. List available resources by educating interpreters on available resources and where to find them.

Bio:

Nellie O. Cordova is an experienced Medical Interpreter Consultant with a demonstrated history of working in the professional training & coaching industry. She is skilled in Nonprofit Organizations, Conflict Resolution, Youth Leadership, Fundraising, and Healthcare Management. She has held a staff position at Arkansas Children's Hospital Northwest where she helped Spanish speaking patients on a daily basis.

Title - Partnering for Success in Pediatric Surgery: Interpreting for Child Life Specialists

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Oscar Rojas, CMI-Spanish, CHI™-Spanish

Abstract: Pediatric surgery is already an overwhelming space for families — add stress, fear, and big medical emotions, and communication becomes mission-critical. Interpreters are often the bridge that keeps everything steady. But one partner we don't always highlight enough is the Child Life Specialist (CLS). These professionals guide children and their families through procedures with developmentally appropriate prep, emotional support, and coping tools that make a world of difference. This session will introduce interpreters to the unique goals and responsibilities of CLSs in the perioperative process and explore strategies for effective collaboration. Participants will gain practical skills to support CLS-led interventions for patients, siblings, and caregivers, while maintaining professional interpreting standards. Through interactive role-play and discussion, attendees will learn best practices and common pitfalls when interpreting for child life services, ultimately strengthening human connections in an evolving healthcare landscape.

Objectives:

1. Review the Role of Child Life Specialists: Describe the core objectives and interventions of CLSs in perioperative settings, focusing on emotional support, coping strategies, and family-centered care.
2. Strengthen Collaborative Skills: Identify practical techniques interpreters can use to support CLS-led interactions with patients, siblings, and caregivers while maintaining accuracy, neutrality, and trust.
3. Utilize Child Life Communication Tools Effectively: Interpret accurately when CLSs use visual aids, medical play, metaphors, or distraction tools, ensuring families receive the full intent and impact of the intervention.



4. Apply Best Practices Through Role-Play: Demonstrate effective interpreting behaviors in simulated child life scenarios, using hands-on practice to reinforce ethical boundaries, situational awareness, and communication strategies.

Bio:

Oscar Rojas, CMI-Spanish, CHI™-Spanish is a Seasoned Dual Certified Spanish Medical/Healthcare Interpreter (CMI/CHI™) with 8 years of experience in healthcare and educational settings. Expertise in providing full-level interpretation and translation services, training entry-level interpreters, and coordinating with third-party language vendors. He holds an Operations Supervisor position at Medical Interpreters at Children's Hospital Colorado. He also works as a Spanish Translator at Mojave Unified School District.

Title - Theatre for Interpreters, Trainers, and Presenters

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Tamas Farkas

Abstract: "All the world's a stage" and training, presenting, and interpreting are included in this sentiment. The art of theatre is one that is often overlooked because it is seen as something useless. However, anyone who has ever taken a theatre class will tell you that the applications of the skills learned in theatre classes are endless and will make you a better person, trainer, presenter, and interpreter. During this session we will learn about how the theatrical skills of self-awareness, observation, and communication can be transferred from theatre to training, presenting, and interpreting.

Objectives:

1. Attendees will experiment with Self-Awareness activities to become more authentic.
2. Attendees will apply Observation techniques to better understand meaning in communication.
3. Attendees will practice Communication skills for effective communication.
4. Attendees will demonstrate how to warm-up their bodies and voices for work.

Bio:

Tamas Farkas is a Director of Language Access Programs at Cross Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP). CCHCP has been engaged in building cultural competence in health care systems since 1992. CCHCP's primary goal is to improve the health care of communities that face linguistic and cultural barriers. He is also on Board of Directors for International Medical Interpreter Association (IMIA). He has worked with and trained numerous health departments, government agencies, hospitals, language service organizations, universities, and schools on various aspects of medical interpreting and language access. He is a nationally certified medical interpreter, with



proficiency in 5 languages. In addition to his native language Hungarian, he holds a bachelor's degree in modern languages (German and French). After studying in Switzerland, he lived in Puerto Rico and gained Spanish Proficiency. Tamas' hobbies include creating art, running, and swimming.

Session 4: 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm (60 minutes / 1 hour session)

Title - AI for Medical Interpreters: Leveraging Technology Without Losing the Human Touch

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Alegna Zavatti

Abstract: As artificial intelligence (AI) transforms communication across industries, medical interpreters are uniquely positioned to benefit from its potential—when used safely and ethically. This presentation introduces interpreters to the fundamentals of AI and demonstrates how these tools can enhance preparation, accuracy, and continuing education in healthcare settings without compromising patient privacy or professional integrity.

Objectives:

1. Discuss what artificial intelligence is.
2. Practice leveraging AI to prepare for an encounter.
3. Review Safe and Compliant AI practices.
4. Evaluate ways to integrate AI into interpreting workflows.

Bio:

Alegna Zavatti is the Director of Interpreter Services at Boston Medical Center, where she manages and oversees interpreter and translation operations. She graduated from Universidad Central de Venezuela with a bachelor's degree in Translation and Conference Interpretation and completed Boston University's Medical, Legal and Community Interpreting Certificate program. She is a board member of the Forum on the Coordination of Interpreter Services (FOCIS), an organization that aims at creating best practices for interpreter services departments and enhancing language access and is a Commissioner with the Commission for Certified Health Care Interpreters (CCHI).

Title - As ready as I'll ever be: How to manage idiomatic expressions and sayings

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Heidi Hobson, CHI-Spanish

Abstract: Idiomatic expressions—those colorful, culture-bound phrases found in every language—can be both delightful and daunting. Their literal meanings often mislead, offering few clues to their true meaning and creating confusion for those outside the culture. Understanding



idioms requires more than vocabulary; it demands insight into the history, humor, and the traditions that shaped them.

In this presentation, we'll explore how recognizing and discovering equivalent idiomatic expressions across cultures can enhance accurate, confident interpretation and translation. Participants will be invited to uncover parallels within their own languages and cultural backgrounds, empowering them to convey meaning—not just meaningless words—with clarity and authenticity.

Objectives:

1. Explore how culture, history, and humor shape the idioms we use every day.
2. Discover what makes idiomatic expressions so tricky—and fun—to work with across different languages.
3. Share and compare similar idioms from your own language or culture to find surprising connections.
4. Practice ways to interpret and translate idioms so your meaning comes through clearly and naturally.

Bio:

Heidi Hobson was born and raised in Guatemala, where she learned English and discovered her love for languages. Heidi began interpreting as a Volunteer for International Medical Mission Campaigns throughout rural areas of Guatemala and El Salvador. Heidi served as a relay medical interpreter for multitudes of Indigenous and Spanish speaking patients for free immunization campaigns, dental, speech therapy, nutrition, and surgical clinics, with experience in a variety of other disciplines and fields. She taught Medical Interpretation focusing on the Ethics and Standards of care, for fellow employees. She is a qualified Court Interpreter for the State of Florida.

Title - Bridging the Interpretation Gap: Understanding the Disconnect Between Recognized Need and Utilization of Professional Medical Interpreters

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Patricia A. Alonzo

Abstract: In an era of shifting healthcare landscapes and evolving patient demographics, professional medical interpreters serve as steady voices bridging communication gaps for Limited English Proficient (LEP) patients. However, a critical disconnect exists between healthcare providers' recognition of interpretation needs and their actual utilization of professional interpreters. This phenomenological study examines the lived experiences of qualified and certified medical interpreters working with Spanish-speaking LEP patients to illuminate this persistent gap and its profound impact on patient outcomes.



Through in-depth interviews with experienced medical interpreters (minimum 3 years' experience) working across onsite, over-the-phone (OPI), and video remote interpreting (VRI) modalities, this research reveals that professional interpreters are utilized only one-third of the time during medical encounters, even when providers identify the need for interpretation services. This utilization gap contributes to adverse patient events, with an estimated annual cost of \$3.4 billion in preventable complications for LEP patients.

The study findings highlight the paradox facing healthcare institutions: while federal mandates (Title VI, ACA Section 1557, CLAS standards) require language access, systemic barriers—including cost concerns (\$45-150/hour for in-person services, \$1.25-3.49/minute for remote services), inadequate staffing models, and lack of 24/7 qualified interpreter availability—perpetuate underutilization of professional services. Despite the proven benefits of professional interpreters in reducing medical errors, decreasing malpractice risk, and improving patient comprehension and satisfaction, the gap between need recognition and service utilization remains a persistent challenge.

This presentation will explore the interpreters' perspectives on navigating these "shifting sands" of healthcare delivery while maintaining their role as "steady voices" for LEP patients. Key discussion points include: the hidden costs of interpreter underutilization, strategies for improving integration of professional interpreting services, and recommendations for healthcare institutions to bridge the utilization gap.

Objectives:

1. Identify the primary factors contributing to the gap between recognized need and actual utilization of professional medical interpreters in clinical settings.
2. Analyze the financial and clinical impact of interpreter underutilization on LEP patient outcomes and healthcare system costs.
3. Evaluate current barriers preventing consistent use of qualified and certified interpreters despite federal mandates and institutional policies.
4. Develop actionable strategies to improve integration and utilization of professional interpreting services in their healthcare settings.

Bio:

Patricia A. Alonzo is a Trilingual Interpreter. Her interpreting experience and background are working with Spanish Limited English individual and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community with a focus on the Spanish Deaf Community. She holds a bachelor's degree from Columbia College Chicago in American Sign Language Interpreting and master's in education. Her research focuses on LEP health outcomes when using an interpreter. She is currently a Director of Strategic Partnerships at Equiti. Before this she held management positions at Universal Language Operations and AMN Language Services, formerly known as Stratus Video. Her passion



is bridging the gap of communication and making sure all individuals have the power and dignity to make good healthcare decisions in their language.

Title – Building Better Bridges: Aligning Training with Healthcare Realities

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Silvina de la Iglesia

Co-presenter: Giselle Lopez-Ingram

Abstract: The rapid evolution of healthcare delivery has left interpreter training curricula behind, revealing a disconnect between classroom learning and the real-world needs of patients and healthcare institutions in multicultural and multilingual communities, such as New York City. In this presentation, we will examine emerging challenges in medical interpreter education from three key perspectives: the interpreter providing services in person, by phone, or remotely; the healthcare organization that contracts interpretation services and conducts quality control; and the educator responsible for training medical interpreters with tools and resources adapted to today's job market.

We will explore critical gaps in interpreter preparation, with particular attention to unconscious bias and its impact on patient care, the unique communication demands of palliative care settings where cultural sensitivity and human connection are paramount, and the urgent need for emotional support systems to address interpreter vicarious trauma and burnout. We will also examine interpreter and patient safety protocols that are often overlooked in traditional curricula. Join us to explore evidence-based strategies for adapting medical interpreter training in the United States, ensuring that interpreters are equipped not only with linguistic skills but also with the emotional resilience and cultural competencies essential for bridging language barriers, building trust, and advocating effectively—regardless of the delivery modality.

Objectives:

1. Discuss and highlight the importance of keeping track of interpreting experience and emotions.
2. Practice how to develop the habit of jotting down the thoughts, reflections, and emotions as they happen.
3. Discuss how to share your experience and even frustrations with your colleagues and co-workers.
4. Demonstrate how to expand and enrich your notes and writings for a wider audience and larger impacts.

Bios:



Silvina de la Iglesia has worked in language access in healthcare in New York for nearly two decades. She is an Adjunct Lecturer at Hunter College (CUNY) teaching Community and Medical Interpreting and serves on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Medical Spanish. She is also an Administrative Coordinator at the Center for Clinician Multilingualism. Silvina holds a BA in Translation and Interpretation from Hunter College and Masters in Medical Translation from Spain. She is an Authorized POLOM Educator recognized for her commitment to facilitating communication between patients and healthcare providers, contributing to improved patient outcomes and culturally responsive care.

Giselle Lopez-Ingram has worked as an interpreter and translator in New York since 2012. She is a Language Coordinator for two Mount Sinai hospitals and teaches Fundamentals of Medical Interpreting at LaGuardia Community College. Originally from Nicaragua, she holds a degree in Diplomacy and International Relations specializing in International Development Cooperation.

Title – Growing Our Own: Building a High School Interpreter Pipeline Through the Communication Ambassador Partnership (CAP) of Martha’s Vineyard

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Sheryl Taylor, MPH

Co-presenter: Leah Palmer, Emily Santana

Abstract: In an era when language access needs are rapidly expanding, innovative models are essential to strengthening the interpreter workforce, especially in rural and geographically isolated communities. This session highlights the Communication Ambassador Partnership (CAP) of Martha’s Vineyard, a pioneering school-based interpreter training program that prepares bilingual high school juniors and seniors to become community interpreters. This model is an example of culturally and linguistically appropriate care tailored to our community, particularly since many student interpreters share lived experiences and challenges with the multilingual immigrant families they serve.

Operating during the school day through lunch blocks and elective periods, CAP trains 8–12 students annually, providing foundational skills, ethical grounding, and supervised practice opportunities that bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world service. Upon program completion, students have the opportunity to engage in school-based interpreting at events and meetings, while also accessing mentorship from a network of seasoned interpreters and peers.

Now in its fourth year, this program has become a promising workforce-development pipeline designed specifically for a multicultural island community. After graduation and upon turning 18, participants receive a certificate recognizing their completed training—many then transition



directly into roles as education support professionals, medical office staff, and other health and human services positions across the island.

This workshop will explore CAP’s evolving model, partnerships with community organizations, and emerging continuing-education pathways such as a cohort with the local community college for students pursuing further interpreter training. Participants will also learn about CAP’s virtual local career fair, employment skill building opportunities, and benefits of peer and school support.

Aligned with the conference theme, Human Connections: Interpreting in an Evolving Landscape, this presentation demonstrates how early, intentional preparation of youth can expand access, strengthen community relationships, and cultivate a home-grown interpreter workforce responsive to the cultural and linguistic realities of a unique island community.

Objectives:

1. Describe the core components of the Communication Ambassador Partnership (CAP) model, including school-day training, ethical foundations, and supervised practice for high school interpreters.
2. Identify strategies for developing interpreter pipelines that strengthen community language-access capacity, particularly in rural or geographically isolated settings.
3. Explore partnership models and continuing-education pathways, including mentorship networks, collaborations with community organizations, and community college credit opportunities.
4. Recognize the workforce-development impact of early interpreter preparation, including how CAP supports culturally and linguistically appropriate care and transitions students into real-world roles.

Bios:

Sheryl Taylor, MPH, is a public health professional, consultant, and education administrator. She has 25+years of experience as an equity champion. Much of her work focuses on language access, intra-cultural connection, culturally responsive messaging, engagement, and organizational development. Her clients include health insurance companies, federally qualified community health care centers, hospitals, medical schools, non-profit organizations, and a variety of statewide, regional, and local public health entities.

Through her work, she hopes to inspire more inclusive dialogue that helps people and organizations identify points of connection across the various dimensions of diversity in our world.

Leah Palmer has been the English Language Learning Director for Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools (MVYPS) for over 15 years. Previously, Leah was an ESL teacher for Brockton Public Schools and Wellesley Public Schools. She has a Masters of Teaching ESL from Simmons



University and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Education Leadership from Bridgewater State University. In 2019, she received the Bridgewater Distinguished Graduate Research-Project Award for her research: The Correlation of Massachusetts ESL Teacher Preparation and the ELL Program Ranking. Leah begins her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy at Vanderbilt University in the spring of 2025.

Emily Santana is a Brazilian-Portuguese interpreter who is dedicated to supporting multilingual communities and improving language access. In 2021, she completed the Art of Medical Interpretation training through CCCS, an experience that opened many doors and led her to pursue work in interpreting and bilingual services. She currently works as the Bilingual Administrative Assistant for the English Language Learners (ELL) Program at Martha's Vineyard Public Schools, where she helps connect multilingual families with the school community.

She also serves as a Brazilian-Portuguese Interpreter with the Community Ambassador Partnership of MV (CAP). In addition to interpreting, she coordinates the CAP Stepping Stones Program, which supports first-generation high school students with college and career planning and introduces them to the field of community interpreting.

Title – Soft Skills and Emotional Intelligence: The fuel for success!

CEUs: Pending

Presenter: Analía C. Lang, CHI-Spanish

Abstract: Refueling, recharging, and refocusing are essential in navigating the road to success in the profession of interpreting. Just as racecar drivers must not only master the skills of accelerating, braking, and turning, they must also develop the mental skills of timing and strategy to succeed on the track. Similarly, interpreters must develop perceptive skills that enable them to not only say the right things but to say them at the right time and the right way. This is where soft skills and emotional intelligence can make the difference between success and failure in interpreting. This presentation will explore the critical unseen elements of successful interpreted encounters.

Objectives:

1. Define key soft skills and explain their relevance to the interpreting profession.
2. Identify the core components of emotional intelligence and demonstrate why they are vital to successful interpreted encounters.
3. Connect soft skills and emotional intelligence to real-world interpreting scenarios to illustrate their combined impact.
4. Explore how emotional intelligence facilitates the implementation of ethics and best practices in the interpreted encounter.

Bio:



Analía C. Lang, CHI-Spanish, acquired her BA from Indiana University. She has been a healthcare interpreter since 2005. Analía has interpreted in all modalities, face-to-face, VRI, and OPI.

As a trainer, Analía has instructed interpreters for more than 20 years. She has developed webinars, workshops, and training curricula. She has been a presenter at conferences, and she is a contributing author of The Remote Interpreter textbook. She serves as a member of the NCIHC STC and as a co-chair of its NES work group. Presently, Analía is the Manager of Training and Curriculum for Cross-Cultural Communications, LLC.