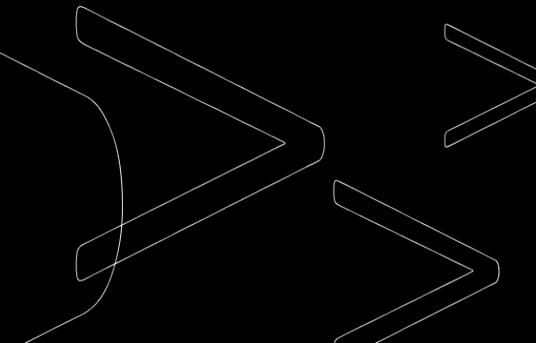


Medical Interpreter Apprenticeship: A Case Study

*Lessons Learned from the Women & Infants
Hospital/SEIU 1199NE Medical Interpreter
Apprenticeship Program*



Apprenticeship 101

Related Technical Instruction

- Must have 144 hours of related instruction per year
- Most of the time instruction is unpaid
- Can include time for studying and exam preparation
- Can include a mix of courses, instructors, vendors, etc.
- Can take place before, during, or after OJL

On-the-Job Learning

- Approximately 2000-2500 hours per year
- OJL hours must be paid (usually by employer)
- Some prior learning/working credit can be given
- At least 1 wage increase required upon FULL competency/program completion
- OJL completed with guidance from Journey worker/Mentor (professional, fully proficient in field)

Reasons for Medical Interpreter Apprenticeship

Existing Interpreter Services included:

- On-demand, phone interpreters (and some VRI)
- Agency Interpreting (used for clinic and offsite scheduled appointments)
- Bilingual Staff

Issues with existing options:

- 1) **On-demand:** Affordable, but long wait times, poor phone quality, and impersonal service reduced quality of service and patient satisfaction
- 2) **Agency:** Expensive, requires scheduling in advance, minimum costs for patient no-shows, and lack of specialty knowledge
- 3) **Staff:** Free, but opens hospital and staff to liability, no regular and reliable assessment of staff language proficiency, and pulling staff off their assignments mid-shift results in department/staffing issues throughout the hospital

Women & Infants Hospital/SEIU 1199NE Medical Interpreter Apprenticeship (Details)

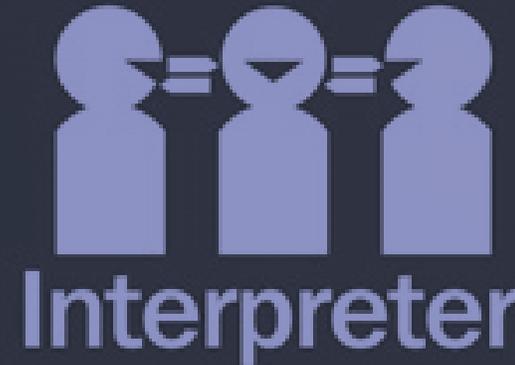
Related Technical Instruction (180-184 hours)

- Medical Terminology (30 hours)
- UMASS AHEC (60 hours)
- Group Roleplaying/Scenarios (24 hours)
- Continuous 1-on-1 Mentoring (20-24 hours)
- Written & Oral Exam Preparation Course (36 hours)
- Self-Study (10 hours)

Women & Infants Hospital/SEIU 1199NE Medical Interpreter Apprenticeship (Details)

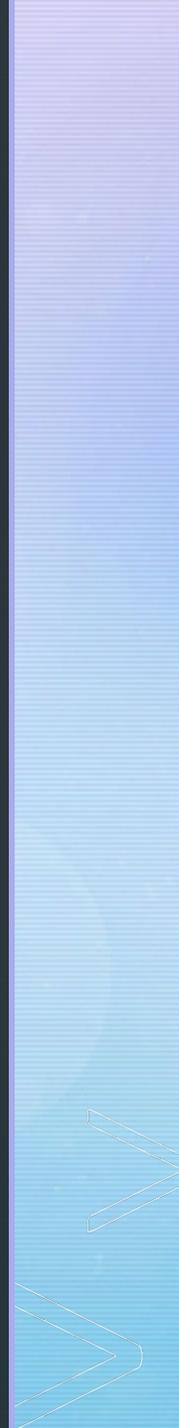
On-the-Job Learning (1200 hours: Prior Credit; 800 hours: OJL Site Rotation)

- 3 rotation sites
 - Emergency Department
 - Obstetrics & Gynecology Care Center
 - Prenatal Diagnosis Center
- Journeyworker: Denise Paulson (employed by 1199NE Training & Upgrading Fund)
- Scheduling: 3 days/week, 8hours/day, 11.5 weeks per rotation



FUNDING

- **Care New England/Department of Labor Subrecipient Grant Award**
For: Planning & Program Development
- **Women & Infants Hospital**
For: OJL Wages and Back-wages
- **SEIU 1199NE Training & Upgrading Fund**
For: Pre-Assessment, Medical Terminology, and 60-Hour Medical Interpreter Training Course
- **Healthcare Career Advancement Program (HCAP)**
For: Exam Prep Course, Exam Cost, Additional Apprentices Supports





RECRUITMENT

- Recruitment pool consisted of employees receiving collectively bargained wage-stipend for shift interpreting (*at time of recruitment efforts*)
- Roughly 105 employees received stipend, including CNAs, MAs, RNs, and Clinical Support Professionals (Financial Counselors, Unit Secretaries, etc.)
- 56 expressed interest and took pre-assessment; 28 passed assessment and took the course; 9 passed course; 4 entered OJL Site Rotations

TIMELINE & SCHEDULING



- RTI began in Spring 2018 (60-hour UMMS course), additional RTI completed during OJL (*January 2019-February 2020*)
- UMMS course hosted onsite at WIH (2 evenings per week)
- National Exam Preparation hosted at WIH 4 evenings and 2 Saturdays (January 2020)
- Originally, OJL had planned for 2 days per week for 1 year; due to concerns about backfill wages within Apprentices' home departments, OJL scheduled for 3 8-hour shifts per week (34.5 weeks total)
- OJL ran mid-January 2019 thru November 2020

PARTNERSHIP DYNAMICS: BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

BENEFITS

- Working with management and union supports program efficacy
- Union “buy-in” helps recruitment and ongoing participation
- CBAs ensure certain issues are mostly avoided (i.e. wages, OT, LOAs, etc.)
- Working with Corporate VPs/Directors helps push system-wide initiatives (i.e. DEI)

CHALLENGES

- Labor-management disagreements can derail programs and initiatives (i.e. ongoing department/workforce issues)
- Decision-making can hinder progress, program adjustments and addendums, and prevent/delay additional cohorts due to scheduling challenges and bureaucracy
- Messaging can sometimes be confused and incorrect (“too-many cooks”) due to opposing views and interests
- Opposition on the expectation of outcomes and completions



DETERMINING APPRENTICESHIP COMPLETION

Apprentices were deemed completed from the Apprenticeship upon:

- 1) Completion of OJL rotation hours
- 2) Full competency (based upon Preceptor evaluation of Apprenticeship Standards)
- 3) Successful completion of National Certification Exam

Of 4 Apprentices, all completed OJL hours and were deemed fully competent, but none have sat for the National Exam at this time. *This has resulted in 0 Apprentices gaining FULL program completion.*

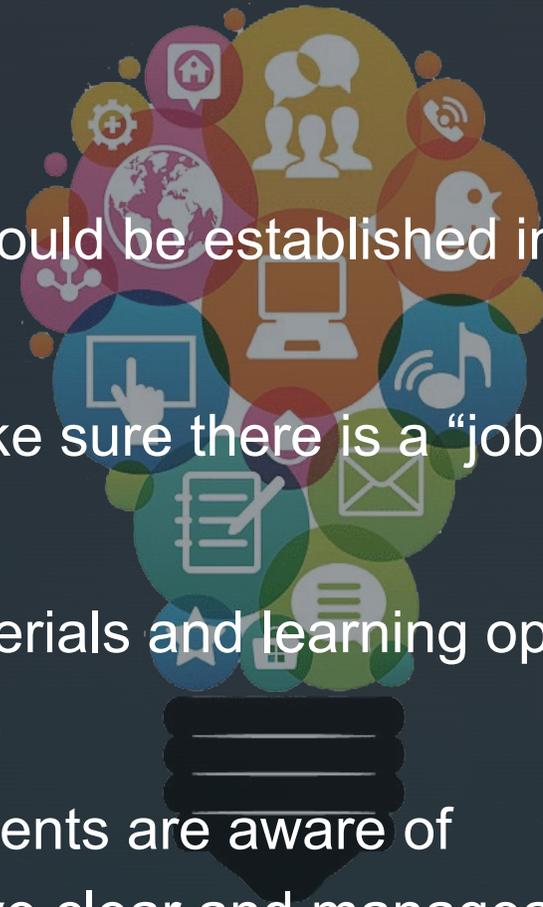
(All Apprentices did complete the Exam Prep course. Scheduling delays occurred due to 2020 COVID-19 closures.)

RESULTS

- Beginning in 2019, W&I started seriously considering the case for onsite medical interpretation.
- In Summer 2019, comprehensive data analysis of phone, VRI, and agency interpreting resulted in a report showing costs savings if the hospital elected in-house interpreters.
- In 2020, 3 full time Interpreter positions were posted and interpreters have since been hired.
- CNE has also started preliminary conversations to offer a similar (non-apprenticeship) program in some of its other OUs in the future.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Recruitment is KEY!
- Staffing and administrative supports are vital
- Labor and Management agreement and MOUs should be established in the development stage (prior to enrollment)
- Confirm expectations for post-apprenticeship (make sure there is a “job” tied to the apprenticeship)
- Apprentices benefit from a variety of teaching materials and learning options; provide binders for notes, vocabulary, articles, etc.
- Work with administration to make sure all departments are aware of Apprenticeship; OJL sites/departments should have clear and manageable expectations while working with Apprentices



➤ Additional Challenges and Considerations

- The expectation of any Apprenticeship is that the Apprentice ends the program with a higher-wage and in a new job classification.
- If you are using incumbent workers, consideration for vacations, sick days, and back-wages for fill-in staff should be made during OJL.
- Before hosting any program, try providing potential candidates with an information session or other Q&A opportunity; make sure all program details have been determined before you host sessions.
- Assigned roles are strongly recommended. Who is tracking OJL hours? Making sure RTI is completed? Collecting data and milestones?



QUESTIONS

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Thank you!

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