



Minnesota Interpreter NEWSLETTER

TRANSLATION BEST PRACTICES

Interpreters are often asked to translate documents on the spot or write out specific instructions for a patient during the course of the appointment.

It is important to recognize that this task requires a different skills set than interpreting. An interpreter must be able to read and write well in both English and the Target Language to accomplish accurately the task of translating.

It is wonderful for an interpreter to competently provide translation of short, patient specific instructions if they possess the skill set to do this task well.

Unfortunately, many of the care teams we work with are unaware of the skills necessary to provide this important task and may ask more than what is appropriate.

***It is important that interpreters limit themselves
to only performing tasks for which they are qualified.***

A FEW PIECES OF INFORMATION ABOUT TRANSLATIONS:

- Healthcare facilities should translate certain documents such as consent forms, HIPAA documents, patient education materials, specific care instructions and legal documents.
- Specific instructions for the patient are appropriate for sight translation *as long as the provider is present*, so the patient's questions can be answered by the provider rather than the interpreter.
- Interpreters may not possess the skills nor have the time to complete and perfect a translation. This practice should be limited to very short, patient specific documents *only if the interpreter is comfortable with the task.*

If you are asked to translate a document which you are not comfortable, it is important to *speak-up!!!* While the healthcare team might be upset, each organization you interpret for should have a lead worker, liaison or staff person that will handle this type of situation professionally and support your professional decision while helping to educate the healthcare team.

Where Can I Find More information? More information can be found at www.isgmidwest.org



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