



**INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL
INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION**
Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

The Commission for Medical Interpreter Education (CMIE) is Enhancing the Quality, Recognition, and Competitiveness of Medical Interpreter Educational Programs and Organizations through a National Accreditation Program. It serves as public recognition that a program provides quality education

Boston, July 25, 2014 – The IMIA has been working on standardizing medical interpreter education for several years. The IMIA Trainers Division engaged hundreds of trainers across the US and abroad to join this conversation in the past 5 years. The thorough multi-year process included a 700 respondent needs assessment survey, the development of national standards specific to medical interpreter education, a pilot phase, auditor training, and a renowned advisory board. The Commission for Medical Interpreter Education was launched as a special division of the IMIA and completed its work to accredit medical interpreter educational programs in January 2014. These organizations were the first to become accredited:

1. Medical Communication Ambassadors, IN
2. University of Memphis Medical Interpreter Program, TN
3. Liberty Language Service, VA
4. Hackensack University Medical Center, NJ
5. Spanish for All Austin, TX

Accreditation is a process by which an educational program applies for an audit to verify that it meets measurable National Standards for Medical Interpreter Education. *“Until last year we had no measurable standards, just national guidelines for interpreter educators. In order to call them National Standards, they need to be measurable. Basically a standard is a benchmark, where one either is compliant with or is not with that benchmark. It is black and white. This is very different from guidelines which are not prescriptive in nature,”* said Izabel Arocha, IMIA Executive Director. These National Standards for Medical Interpreter Education create a minimum level of quality or excellence as the norm or by which actual attainments are judged. Anyone can say they follow or comply with a standard, but when an organization is accredited, this means a neutral third party verified it in a systematic manner according to professional auditing practices. The education standards include topics such as minimal admission requirements notices to students, MI curriculum, and minimal instructor qualifications.

“Anyone can put up a sign and say they offer a medical interpreting program. The diversity in quality between educational programs is disturbing,” said Marlene Obermeyer, CMIE Chairperson. *“Without minimal standards, educators themselves might not know what they are lacking or what they need to offer. The CMIE National Standards for Medical Interpreter Education will guarantee to the public which programs are actually up to par. When students graduate, they expect to be able to pass certification. Without adequate education that can become a difficult task,”* stated Obermeyer. Commissioners were trained to become auditors and the pilot allowed the Commission to tweak the process. *“We now do a pre-assessment before we do the audit visit, and this has improved the client’s experience,”* stated Sophia Rossovsky, CMIE Vice-Chairperson. *“It is a pleasure to see the standardization of medical interpreter education. Now candidates for our profession have a way to qualify a program; to know if it meets the IMIA minimum standards for medical interpreter education or not,”* stated Mohamad Anwar, CMIE Commissioner and IMIA Board Member/Treasurer. *“Being listed in the IMIA training directory does not constitute approval or accreditation. Accredited programs are marked as such and anyone claiming to be accredited by the IMIA needs to have the accreditation stamp next to their organization’s name,”* stated Jorge Rudko, CMIE Commissioner.

For more information on CMIE Accreditation, see:

<http://www.imiaweb.org/education/accreditationprogram.asp>