



Dear IMIA Members,

IMIA has recently added new options to the member profiles where you may add your certification credentials and Certification information. If you have been certified recently please go to your profile to update your information at <http://www.imiaweb.org/members/profile.asp>.

**There has been confusion about what makes one a “Certified Medical Interpreter (CMI)” or a “Certified Health Interpreter (CHI)”** as opposed to having received a Certificate of Attendance or a Certificate of Achievement/Completion from an educational organization, so we thought it would be helpful to share the following definitions/explanations:

**Certificate of attendance**

one has simply attended a given course or workshop, and is usually provided by a training organization or a university. This interpreter has a certificate.

**Certificate of achievement/completion**

one has completed the hourly requirements of a given course and met certain requirements of the course such as written and/or oral exam, and is usually provided by a training organization or a university. This interpreter has a certificate.

**Certification**

one has completed and passed certification exams given by a certifying organization, and is provided by a certification entity, such as the National Board, CCHI, or RID. This interpreter is certified.

***NOTE: Being certified DOES NOT EQUAL having a certificate.***

You should know that if you advertise yourself as being a certified interpreter, the public could be misled or confused. You can be considered as an interpreter with a training certificate. However you should know that you would be giving misleading information if you advertise yourself as being a certified interpreter, unless you are a certified sign language interpreter or a certified court interpreter either at the state or national level and have undergone a certification process. In addition, if you advertise yourself as a certified medical interpreter, you may find yourself in breach of the bylaws of the IMIA and be terminated as a member.

The only organizations that certify medical interpreters in the United States are the National Board, CCHI and DSHS Washington. The only national organization that certifies sign language interpreters is the RID, although this certification is a generalist certification, not specific to medical interpreting.

There are many certification bodies such as the courts and NAJIT for court interpreters and the ATA certifies translators. There are also governments, national interpreting and translation bodies that certify interpreters and translators abroad.

It is important to know that at the national level, national certification was launched in 2009, bestowed by the vendor neutral and rigorous program of the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters, a non-profit organization that the IMIA co-founded along with LLS.



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL  
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Leading the advancement of professional interpreters

If you want to become a certified interpreter, and receive the CMI credential (Certified Medical Interpreter), you should check out the pre-requisite requirements at [www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org). The written exam is in English and is available in many testing centers across the country on demand. The oral test for Spanish language interpreters will be available in select cities and designated days/hours starting in July. We are happy to report the certification oral exams will also become available in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Russian later this year. More languages and credentials will follow so all interpreters in all languages are able to get certified. All National Board credentials will be of equivalent value and will have a written and oral component.

Later, in early 2011, the Certification Commission for Health Care Interpreters launched their certification testing. As with the National Board, their written exams are in English, yet the oral exam is available only in Spanish and dates and locations for testing need to be prearranged with CCHI. For more information check out [www.healthcareinterpretercertification.org](http://www.healthcareinterpretercertification.org). They are granting two credentials, the Certified Healthcare Interpreter (CHI) to those who pass their written and Spanish oral exam, and the Associate Healthcare Interpreter (AHI) to those that pass their written exam.

As an umbrella association, the IMIA is advocating for health care reform to reimburse credentialed interpreters, regardless of where they have received their certification from. This will be an additional incentive for future medical interpreters like you holding a certificate of a course completion, to become nationally certified medical interpreters.

Best Regards,

IMIA

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