



Western North Carolina Interpreter Network Provides Professional Medical Interpreters to Limited English Proficient/Deaf Patients in the Region

By Janet Oppenheimer | Oct 19, 2012

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WIN, The WNC Interpreter Network, a program of the Western Carolina Medical Society Foundation, provides professional medical interpreters to patients with limited English proficiency (LEP) as well as deaf patients who speak American Sign Language (ASL) on a 24/7 basis throughout the Western North Carolina region.

Although the terms language interpretation and translation are often used interchangeably, interpretation refers to the spoken or visual

language, and translation (as in document translation) to the written language. WIN interpreters do not interpret word-for-word, but meaning-for-meaning. This is why you might notice that non-English conversations can seem to take longer. Many English concepts that are communicated in one or two words can take several phrases to accurately describe in another language, and vice versa.

WIN interpreters possess language proficiency, cultural competency and training in medical terminology. They participate in ongoing professional development and performance evaluation, are members in good standing of the North Carolina Association of Professional Interpreters or other recognized interpreter organizations. WIN interpreters also adhere to a strict code of ethics for professional health care interpreters and have signed confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements. "Today's top healthcare providers aren't waiting for an emergency to care for our LEP population," notes WIN coordinator Mary Jo Dukas. "The area physicians' are trained medical interpreters provided through the WNC Interpreter Network."

Developed in 2005, WIN is a program of the WCMS Foundation and is excited to offer professional medical interpreting services to all physicians, medical practices, hospitals and the community at large. The WCMS Foundation is the physician and community-led charitable arm of the medical society, addressing issues of access to quality healthcare, disparities in health, and health & wellness.

In Henderson County, WCMS additionally works in collaboration with The Henderson County Medical Society. President Charles Hendrichs, M.D. notes, "By pooling our resources and building on our respective capacities, both organizations will become even more effective at engaging and representing physicians. We are especially proud of our recent collaboration with WCMS in presenting last month a provider forum for chronic pain *Prescribing For Pain: A Life or Death Practice?* at Highland Lake Inn in Flat Rock. Attendees heard from Fred Brason II, of Project Lazarus, a community-based program that was piloted in Wilkes County, NC in 2008 and based on the premise that drug overdose deaths are preventable and that all communities are ultimately responsible for their own health. The county has been successful in reducing its overdose mortality rate by 71% since the program's inception. We hope to do further collaborations as this in the future," adds Dr. Hendrichs.

The Western Carolina Medical Society is the physicians' voice advocating for the health of the medical profession, the health of the patient, and the health of the community. WCMS is located at 304 Summit Street, Asheville, North Carolina. For further information call 828.274.2267 or log onto www.mywcms.org. For more information about WIN, please call (828) 274-0950 or log on <http://mywcms.org/Philanthropy/Health-Parity-Priority/WNC-Interpreter-Network>.

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