

# CAREER PATHS IN MEDICAL INTERPRETING

MEETING THE WORKFORCE DEMANDS IN  
NEW YORK CITY

6<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawaii Conference on Language Access  
August 8, 2013

Fern Chan  
Hostos Community College, CUNY



# About Us



- The City University of New York is the nation's leading public urban university with 24 campuses across New York City
- We serve 269,000 degree-credit students and 270,000 adult, and continuing education students in 5 boroughs of NYC

# Hostos Community College



- Division of Continuing Education & Workforce Development
- Serve over 10,000 continuing education students in South Bronx and Upper Manhattan
- Offer skills training and certificate programs to meet market demands in NYC
- CUNY CareerPATH – Preparation for Adults through Training and Higher Education

# Emerging Needs in Interpreting

- 2007 – Conducted market analysis on the state of healthcare interpretation in NYC hospitals. Results showed there was growing demand for properly trained interpreters.
- 2008 – NYC Mayor signed Executive Order 120 establishing a uniform policy and standards for translation and interpretation services for City agencies that have direct interaction with New Yorkers to provide language assistance in the top six languages spoken by New Yorkers.
- 2009 – Launched CUNY Healthcare Interpreter Program to meet the market demands of NYC Hospitals

# Why Consider a Career in Medical Interpreting?

- Exciting field, different situations
- Helping people in need, be the voice of the patient/doctor
- Affordable Care Act – more people having access to healthcare including large population of non-English speakers
- Medicaid reimbursement for language services in NY state

# What Makes a Good Interpreter?

- Fluency in English and target language
- Good communication and people skills
- Compassionate, genuine interest in helping others
- Cultural sensitivity
- Some background in healthcare field

# Training Model: CUNY Healthcare Interpreter Program

- Level 1 – 45 hours
  - Introduction to Healthcare Interpreting
  - Use *The Essential Piece*™ by Culturesmart as its foundation
  - Students have to pass a written exam and an external oral exam to advance to Level 2
- Level 2 – 120 hours
  - Three courses; 40 hours each:
    1. Healthcare Concepts & Terminology
    2. Skills Development I
    3. Skills Development II

## Qualified Interpreter

- Has successfully completed appropriate training program (eg. Level I of CUNY HIP) adhering to the National Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice published by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care.
- Professional skills assessed showing high proficiency in 2 languages
- Qualified to take national certification exam

## Certified Interpreter

- Certified as competent by a professional organization or government entity through rigorous testing based on appropriate and consistent criteria
- As of 2010, there are 2 national certifications for medical interpreters, the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters, (NBCMI), and the Certification Commission for Health Care Interpreters (CCHI)

# Qualified vs. Certified



# Where Can I Get A Job?

## **Hospitals, clinics, healthcare centers**

- As a qualified interpreter, you will be eligible to work in NYC hospitals/city agencies that require trained interpreters
- Full-time interpreter salaries range from \$35,000 to \$55,000 per annum in NYC
- Stackable credential for dual-role employees adding benefit to organization

# Other Job Prospects

## **Interpreting Agencies, Self-Employed**

- As a freelancer, hourly rates range from \$35 to \$50 an hour
- Range of over-the-phone or in-person interpreting
- There is usually a 2-hour minimum charge for your services
- More flexible hours, good part-time option

# Broaden Job Search

- Expand search by other job titles that require bilingual skills eg. Community Health Worker, Outreach Coordinator, Patient Navigator, Healthcare Liaison
- Follow the money! Federal and state funding for healthcare initiatives eg. USDHHS - Outreach & Enrollment Assistance; NY State - Consumer Assistance for NY Health Benefit Exchange: In-Person Assistors and
- Consider adding Legal Interpreting to boost credentials

# Questions?

- Fern Chan – [fchan@hostos.cuny.edu](mailto:fchan@hostos.cuny.edu)  
Director, CUNY CareerPATH

