

## Cross Cultural Health Care Program

### BRIDGING THE GAP

#### Training *for Medical and Health Care Interpreters*

Medical interpreters facilitate communication between patients and health care providers who speak different languages. When a patient and a provider have limited ability to communicate in the same language, it can be nearly impossible to provide quality, patient-centered care. Even if the patient or provider speak a little of the others' language, they often lack knowledge of medical terminology or familiarity with cultural concepts that affect the delivery of effective health care.

While it is common practice in medical centers to allow anyone who professes to speak another language to serve as an interpreter, the risks in doing so are very high. Untrained bilinguals are unaware of: 1) the role of the interpreter; 2) the ethics of interpreting; 3) techniques involved in facilitating a patient-provider communication; and 4) the vocabulary involved in a medical interview. Inevitably, they make mistakes, and mistakes in a health care setting can be serious, even fatal.

Effective interpreting is more complex than speaking two languages. Trained medical interpreters have an understanding of important medical terminology, the specialized skills to faithfully render messages from one language to another, and an understanding of how to mediate cultural misunderstandings. While providers may be tempted to rely on untrained bilingual staff, or a patient's family and friends, to interpret for a patient, working with a medical interpreter greatly increases the chances of successful health outcomes.

The **Bridging the Gap** (BTG) interpreter training was developed in the 1990s by the **Cross Cultural Health Care Program** and has prepared thousands of bilingual individuals to work successfully as medical interpreters. The training is a **five-day, 40-hour credit course**\* in:

- Basic interpreting skills
- Ethics
- Basic medical vocabulary
- How and when to act as a cultural broker
- An overview of the US health care system
- Communication skills and critical thinking
- How and when to act as an advocate
- Professional development

*\*Training meets the required credit hours needed to qualify for certification by the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters & the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters.*

The **Office of Language Access (OLA)** is licensed by the **Cross Cultural Health Care Program** to provide the BTG training in Hawaii. **Mary Santa Maria**, a public health educator with the State Department of Health and a trained interpreter and instructor in medical interpreting, is the official designated trainer for the BTG curriculum under OLA's license.

**Cross Cultural Health Care Program**  
**BRIDGING THE GAP 2016**  
**Training for Medical and Health Care Interpreters**

Sponsored by  
**Office of Language Access (OLA)**  
**Department of Health (DOH)**  
**University of Hawaii Manoa - John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM)**

**WHEN & WHERE**

**March 4, 5, 11, 12 and 19, 2016**

**8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Medical Education Building, Third floor, JABSOM, Honolulu, Hawaii**

**COST** (5 days/40-hour credit course)

- **\$150** (includes registration fee and textbooks; actual value: \$750+)
- **Free** to qualified State and County employees.

**TRAINER**

**Mary Santa Maria, MS/MPH** is a Public Health Educator with the Maui District Health Office and the Chronic Disease Prevention Branch of the State Department of Health (DOH). She is involved with language access, medical interpreting training, and health services access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals. Mary is a trained interpreter and conducts interpreter training programs through the University of Hawaii Maui College Edventure program and the State Office of Language Access (OLA). A member of the State Language Access Advisory Council, she is the designated official trainer for the Bridging the Gap curriculum under OLA's license with Cross Cultural Health Care Program.

**TO APPLY**

Download and complete the application form at <http://health.hawaii.gov/ola/> and submit with your resume describing your interpreter qualifications, including details about your language ability, interpreter experience, and other credentials. **Space is limited to 25** participants who will be selected based on qualifications and language.

**Application Deadline Extended: February 16, 2016**

**Questions & Inquiries:** Contact the Office of Language Access at (808) 586-8730 or email at [ola@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:ola@doh.hawaii.gov).