

Doctors, Patients Struggle with Language Barrier

Interpreters skyrocket as diversity grows

(AP) -- Interpreters trained in medical terminology, especially those speaking Spanish, are in high demand as the country's population becomes more and more diverse.

The boom in Hispanic population has led to the Spanish demand, but there's short supply of speakers of other languages as well.

In Albuquerque, N.M., Navajo and Vietnamese are in high demand, while in the Pacific Northwest, Russian, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Cambodian are needed.

"Certainly in a medical setting, understanding is a matter of life and death," said Leni Kirkman, a spokeswoman at University Hospital in San Antonio, Texas where interpreters in Asian languages are needed.

CyraCom, a Tucson, Ariz.-based language services provider, recently opened an interpreter center in Las Cruces, N.M., tapping the Spanish-speaking population of the Mesilla Valley to fill the need for interpreters in hospitals across the country.

Some hospitals are taking extra steps to attract bilingual employees.

At Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, workers are eligible for incentive pay if they speak another language, said hospital spokeswoman Lynsey Purl. Parkland and the public health system in Houston both offer in-house Spanish medical



Barbara Rayes assists a nurse in discharging Jaime Garcia (left) by translating between the nurse and Garcia's parents. Rayes is the coordinator for Spanish Interpreters at Phoenix Children's Hospital. (AP photo)

terminology classes. CryaCom provides services in 150 different languages. If a patient goes into a hospital and officials there don't recognize the language, they can pick up a phone to access the voice-activated language identification function.

Several services offer interpretation over the telephone, a great help to emergency Dr. Anthony Vita at the Medical Center of McKinney. He has access to Spanish-speaking staff at his hospital but finds that the phone services are sometimes more efficient.

"Sometimes if it's a big emergency and (a patient is) wheeled in there, you don't have time to use that," Vita said. "You have to pull someone in to interpret." For immigrant adults who don't speak English well, children are sometimes the only option, said Kevin Hendzel,

spokesman for the American Translators Association. Eugenia Chien, 29, had to tell her grandfather in Mandarin that he had chronic liver cancer when she was 17 years old. But children face heavy pressure in those situations and sometimes misinterpret important in-

formation because they aren't trained in medical terminology, Hendzel said. State health officials in California and New York are now considering a plan to encourage health care facilities to seek professional interpreters and discourage the use of children.

Intel Co-workers Recruit Diverse Workforce

Adopt students into 'Urban Upload'

College students Tamam Waritu, Cedia Jabbe, Matt McCauley and Trinidad Alvarez-Aguirre are the latest beneficiaries of the Urban Upload program created by the

Network of African American Employees at Intel Oregon. The structured program was established in 1999 to help students understand their career and educational options and empower them to choose and pursue their future career path. Some of the program's features are skills training workshops, job shadows, guest speakers, and emphasis on

math, science and technology. Participating students are also given information about Intel scholarship and internship programs. In the program's first year, 10 students from Jefferson High School participated. During the 2005-06 school year, three high schools, Benson, Jefferson and De La Salle, with a total of 21 students, participated.

"Reaching out into the community is a key goal at Intel Oregon," said Corey Bullard, a local network member. "Urban Upload is a rewarding way to do that." Most recently, Urban Upload has focused on the aspects of entrepreneurship as students follow the process of creating their own business. Teams developed prototypes



Cedia Jabbe is one of Intel's Urban Upload beneficiaries.

of new technology products and learned about supply chain, purchasing, marketing, and sales.

The Network of Intel African Americans was created in 1993 to increase communication between independent site organizations and chartered as an Intel Corporate Employee Support group in December 1995.

There are approximately 40 to 60 participating members representing a cross-section of jobs major Intel sites in the United States. By focusing on recruitment, retention, and cultural awareness, NIA supports Intel's

commitment to diversity and excellence within the workforce. Recognizing that a diverse workforce generates new ideas, provides creative tensions, and leads to more marketable concepts and products, the group's efforts are designed to assist Intel in achieving and maintaining this goal. The network is also a professional resource to assist employees in their adjustment to the community surrounding Intel, and as a volunteer resource for community-based programs which promote individual development.

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