



Healthcare Interpretation Network

# Newsletter

Spring 2007 - Issue 1

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## From the Communications Committee

We are pleased to welcome you to the first 2007 Issue of the HIN Newsletter which is built around the theme of Reflections on the Knowledge and Experience gained by two HIN associated participants at Critical Link 5 – the International Conference on Community Interpreting in the Social, Legal and Healthcare Sectors which was held in Sydney, Australia, April 2007.

The purpose of the HIN Newsletter is to provide a quarterly link between the HIN membership in the spaces between the Network Meetings.

Like the topics addressed in the meetings, we envision a publication which addresses areas of interest and issues of concern to both the HIN membership and those members of the healthcare community who are

committed to working towards the recognition of the importance of trained healthcare interpreters in the delivery of services to the patient populations with limited proficiency in English.

We would also like the Newsletter to be a forum for the presentation and discussion of issues which are of concern to interpreter practitioners in the healthcare sector, as well as the administrators of interpreter services in the sector and those agencies and organisations who deliver the services to the sector.

Like this one, the content of the Newsletter will be two short articles, information on upcoming events of interest to those in the healthcare sector, and updates on developments and publications which speak to community interpreting.

We are grateful to Anita Tancredi and Kris Neilson for taking the time to contribute to this issue of the newsletter and hope their initiative will inspire others to take the time to contribute to future issues of the Newsletter.

Finally, we are seeking your advice as to theme areas for the Newsletter, topics which you think would be of interest to the HIN membership, and individuals whom you think might be approached to contribute articles for publication. To assist you in responding to this request we would appreciate your completing the questionnaire on page 6 of the Newsletter and returning it to our email address [communications@healthcareininterpretationnetwork.ca](mailto:communications@healthcareininterpretationnetwork.ca)

*Committee Members: Diana Abraham, Nancy Cornish, Kinga Miklos, Stella Rahman*

## Updates on the Work of the HIN Committees

### Membership Committee

The Mandate of the HIN Membership Committee is to identify and implement strategies for recruiting and retaining corporate (not-for-profit, public sector and for-profit private sector organizations) and individual members on an annual basis. Closely working with other HIN committees, the Membership Committee is responsible for developing activities and benefits that will best meet a broad spectrum of our members' needs.

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## Ongoing activities:

1. Membership renewal and recruitment
2. Design and organize the quarterly members' network meeting
3. Update member's information
4. Develop and maintain members' directory
5. Solicit and respond to members' feedback with regard to membership services

## Information updates:

The 2007-2008 membership renewal is in process. Individualized membership renewal packages (including an invoice for membership fee) were sent to members via email in April. Members who request hard copy packages should contact HIN Membership by email [membership@healthcareinterpretationnetwork.ca](mailto:membership@healthcareinterpretationnetwork.ca) or leave a message at 416-324-8677 ext. 288

*Committee Leads: Fei Tang, Lisette Figueiredo, Marina Kolodizner, Axelle Janczur*

## Policy and Standards Committee

This committee is dedicated to formulating and developing policies which guide the practice of the Healthcare Interpretation Network in all areas of its operation. This committee is currently involved in researching and developing Standards of Practice for Interpreters.

*Committee Leads : Elba de Leon, Lola Bendana, Axelle Janczur*

A subcommittee of the P and S Committee is responsible for the development of a multilingual terminology database to manage terminology used in the healthcare community of Greater Toronto. The development of the system will be a joint project of interpreters from the HIN membership and the Research Group for Translation and Transcultural Contact at York University.

Members of the sub-committee would like to thank Dr. Silvana Carr, Director, Vancouver Community Interpreter Training Program who met with them in Toronto and shared her wealth of experience on the development of terminology databases.

*Sub-Committee Leads : Lola Bendana, Lisette Figueiredo*

## Resource Development Committee

The Resource Development Committee is in the process of developing short, medium and long-term goals to obtain funding to support the projects and operating costs for the organization. The Committee is hoping to

explore funding opportunities within the private, not-for-profit and government sectors. The Committee will also be seeking advice from the HIN Membership with respect to its preferences for educational projects and other related activities. One idea relates to the hosting of a "job fair" type event which will allow networking opportunities for employers of healthcare interpreters and our independent members.

*Committee Leads: Elizabeth Abraham, Gurwinder Gill*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Mark your calendars for the next HIN Membership Meeting!

**Date:** Tuesday, May 29 from 1:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Location:** Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, 33 Russell St., Room T321 on the 3rd floor (use the elevator on the Spadina side of the building)

### Presentations and Discussions on:

*The relevance of the learnings from the Critical Link 2007 Conference on the healthcare interpretation services in Ontario.*

**Anita Tancredi** Staff Interpreter, Hospital for Sick Children

*The challenges of working with volunteer interpreters when there is no funding for interpreter services in a hospital setting.*

**Yasmin Vali** Director, Community and Patient Relations, The Scarborough Hospital

Everyone is welcome to join us for these stimulating discussions. Light refreshments provided.

### Admission:

No charge for Members in Good Standing (Corporate members can register as many as five people for free)  
Non-members \$5.00 per person payable at the door

Please RSVP to:

[membership@healthcareinterpretationnetwork.ca](mailto:membership@healthcareinterpretationnetwork.ca)

## Conferences, Training and Educational Events

### National Transcultural Health Conference

Montréal, Québec, May 10th and 11th 2007

Hosted by the Montreal Children's Hospital and McGill University Health Centre, this conference is designed towards Advancing Knowledge, Strategy and Connectedness in Healthcare Across Cultures, through the examination of current and emerging practices which make healthcare institutions culturally viable and the essential role of evidence-based research in the development of future transcultural/diversity practices and policies.

**Nancy Cornish** of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children is on the National Planning Committee for this Conference and will be in attendance. Nancy has promised to submit a brief summary of highlights from the conference for our summer issue of this Newsletter.

### Highlights from Critical Link Conference 5 in Sydney, Australia April 11 – 15, 2007

I recently attended the fifth international Critical Link Congress dedicated to the advancement of community interpreting, hosted by the University of Western Sydney in Australia. It is my pleasure to provide you with a brief overview and some personal reflections on how this experience has affected me as an interpreter practitioner in the medical / health community.

The theme for the well-organized and insightful Congress was "Quality in interpreting: a shared responsibility." All professionals who benefit from working with interpreters are seen as responsible for ensuring and improving quality in interpreting and advancement of the profession.

An array of professionals from the public and private sector, health and educational institutions as well as governments was present. Speakers and attendees included interpreter educators; university professors of linguistics, interpreting and translation; interpreter practitioners; translators; researchers; theorists; ethicists; lecturers; medical and social anthropologists; medical and legal practitioners; coordinators, directors and founders of language services. All share an interest in setting priorities and providing input in the development of strategies

to address the provision of quality in the interpreting profession.

I will focus on one particular panel discussion which addressed the question, "What is the responsibility of the training institution, the interpreter, the system, the accrediting body, and the professional association for quality in interpreting?"

Five speakers provided a response. Dr. Cynthia Roy, coordinator of the Interpretation Department at Gallaudet University, USA spoke about the training institution's responsibility, stating that interpreter education programs are responsible for ensuring quality by demonstrating effective teaching standards for interpreter training and ensuring that qualifications and standards of responsibilities are adequately met.

Another perspective was presented by senior lecturer, Ms. Rachel McKee, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University. McKee conducted a survey of New Zealand working interpreters, both spoken and sign, who listed the top six "characteristics" of quality interpreting as the following: accuracy, professional conduct, interactional dynamics, impartiality, clear target message (TM) form and meaning, and appropriate TM delivery. The survey also reported that interpreters believe certain aspects exist that "enable" quality interpreting. These include having content and contextual knowledge for the specific interpreting assignment; training and professional development; experience; self-education and confidence; and interpersonal and communication skills.

Responding to the system's or government's responsibility was Chris Greatorex, Administrator and Director of TIS National – a 24-hour, 7 day a week Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) of the Australian Government, funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs for the past fifty years. He spoke of a more collective approach noting that "everyone is responsible" for quality in interpreting. The interpreter abides by the Code of Ethics and pursues professional development and self-analysis. The client agency manages requests, gives clear instructions to both users and providers, books appropriate interpreters, maintains well-trained staff, has cultural awareness, and monitors service provision. The service providers and the limited-English speaker work effectively with the interpreter within their specified role and responsibility. Greatorex recommended the importance of language service agencies' implementation of accountability mechanisms, quality assurance procedures through client satisfaction surveys, and business practices such as complaints handling mechanisms to further maintain quality standards.

Alan Raisbeck, Manager, NSW State Office, National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, Australia spoke about the Accrediting Body's responsibility for quality. Raisbeck raised the importance of examiner selection to ensure that examiners possess native level proficiency, accreditation as an interpreter/translator, working experience as an interpreter/translator, tertiary qualifications, experience in setting and marking tests, impartiality, objectivity, integrity and good character. He also stressed the necessity for examiner development such as mandatory annual training for further professional growth; and the requirement for quality reviews including testing administrators, hiring independent test markers and validating the accreditation process.

Lastly, in responding to the Professional Association's responsibility, the witty and animated Henry Liu, President of NZSTI (New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters) made several thought-provoking observations on the subject of quality. Liu suggested that quality is dependent on how it is measured, on whether there is a comparable standard, on one's perspective, on subjectivity, and upon an individual basis. He stressed the imperative need for mandatory membership in a professional organization to ensure a pool of qualified, professional interpreters. This organization is at least partially recognized by those benefiting from working with interpreters, i.e., health care practitioners, government and legal practitioners, patients or clients, institutions, accreditation bodies, and agencies. The role of a professional association is to ensure quality by setting and maintaining quality standards, by promoting continued professional development, by providing indemnity and insurance, and by promoting awareness of the profession within government agencies and the wider community.

There were numerous other valuable and notable workshops, papers and poster presentations during the five-day conference. I observed a definite awareness within the interpreting community and more importantly, an increasing international acknowledgement by those professions that benefit from working with interpreters that quality in interpreting is, indeed, a shared responsibility!

This conference emphasized the need for developing a benchmark for quality in interpreting. It is imperative to have a framework for measuring quality, for establishing quality standards nationally, internationally and across sub-sectors, and to implement quality management processes. As Greatorex noted, The American Society for Quality defines quality as "the characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy needs" or "a

product or service that is free of deficiencies." We can begin to achieve this goal only by first defining what we do best, and subsequently acknowledging those aspects that need improvement.

On a lighter and more personal note, I found Australia to be a very welcoming and inviting country. I discovered that it is a land of extremes ranging from a dry, arid desert in the centre to dense tropical rainforests and endless spectacular beaches along the periphery. It was definitely a long way to travel from Toronto but certainly worth every effort. It is unfortunate, however, that more representatives from Ontario and Canada were not able to attend. I had the pleasure of meeting other interpreter practitioners from around the world who shared my passion for interpreting and its professional practice. I felt validated professionally and personally as I listened to the quantitative and qualitative results of studies presented by researchers, academics, service providers and practitioners alike.

As they say in Oz, G'bye for now!

Anita Tancredi  
Staff Interpreter  
Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto

Thank you to HIN Member Dorene Weston for her copy editing contribution to Anita's submission.

### **Critical Link 5 Sparks Discussion and Reflection on Quality, Down-under**

Kristofer Nielsen, Provincial Language Service, Vancouver BC

In April 2007 I had the pleasure of attending the Critical Link 5 International Congress on Interpreting in the Community, held in Parramatta, Sydney, Australia. The 5-day conference brought together researchers, academics, practitioners, providers and administrators from around the world, all with the common goal of understanding, analyzing and discussing issues related to our shared responsibility for quality in interpreting. The conference aimed to generate discussion on: the meaning of quality in interpreting; the responsibility for quality interpreting being shared by all those involved; and, the expectations and demands of those involved in the interpreted encounter.

While quality seems like an inherent goal that we are all striving towards, it was interesting to hear and see the varying perspectives on who is responsible for the complimentary and often contradictory elements required to provide, create and ensure quality in

interpreting. The theme encouraged discussions related to training, recruitment, standards, certification, role and accuracy of interpreters, but also on the responsibility for those requesting an interpreter and those administering services to play an active and committed role in creating an industry that is conducive to quality.

The packed program featured diverse presentations that analyzed community interpreting from a variety of perspectives. From the macro environment of government policy and discourse analysis to the micro environment of interpreting strategies used by Berber intercultural mediators in Belgium, the conference offered a variety of perspectives and findings that we can use to formulate common notions of quality and the conditions necessary to support such quality.

The common thread that emerged from all of the presentations, voices and countries at the conference was that the baseline for quality in the interpreting industry comes from the lowest common denominator, rather than any midline or high-end standard. Presentations and questions from the audience brought the discussions back to the fact that it is not the best qualified and most accurate interpreter that sets the foundation for quality, but rather the least qualified. And the least professional service-provider and the least informed service-user become the foundation of defining and addressing issues of quality in an interpreted encounter. Essentially, quality can only be achieved by identifying and addressing the issues that lurk in the dark corners of interpreting – bringing to the surface the hidden issues that are the cornerstone of quality – so that the minimum standard can be set.

Of particular take-away interest was the pre-conference tour of the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) run by the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs ([www.immi.gov.au/tis](http://www.immi.gov.au/tis)). The service has been in existence for almost 50 years and this past year provided approximately 550,000 telephone-interpreted encounters and over 50,000 face-to-face interpreted encounters across Australia, 45% of which were initiated by a non-English speaker. The service demonstrated how both public and private policy, program and practice environments must all work together to create a quality service, whereby providers understand what to provide, users understand what to expect and administrators understand how to provide it. While Australia's Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society provided the impetus for improving access to public services, the high quality language services that were provided through programs such as TIS have also had a 'trickle-down' effect whereby private services utilize similar strategies and services to reach out to the diverse population of Australia. For example,

Telstra, the national telephone service provider in Australia, added the TIS number to the bottom of all of their customer bills so that their non-English speaking customers can access an interpreter should they wish to contact Telstra regarding their statement. Such an example was encouraging in a Canadian context as it demonstrated how public and private collaborations can work together to improve the interpreting industry by increasing volumes and include the voice of the all too forgotten non-English speaker.

The sense of community that this conference cultivated was not only invigorating, but it provided a common framework for discussions and ongoing dialogue related to good, promising and best practices and allowed many participants, including myself, to take an introspective and reflective approach to the often overwhelming daily operations. Further, the conference was unique in its marriage of stakeholders: few conferences focusing on community interpreting successfully bring together such a diverse group of academics and researchers with practitioners and providers, and find so much common ground as to truly advance the field.

As an administrator of interpreter services programs, the Critical Link conference provided me with a sense of innovation and advancement and I am encouraged by the growing international community that is coming together, especially the growing voice and strength of interpreters themselves in such forums. As the field continues to advance, all the voices need to be heard and understood for their unique perspective and interpreters themselves need to be empowered to provide a strong, central voice in such discussions.

## **Publications of Interest**

Diana Abraham & Marco Fiola (2007) Making the case for Community Interpreting in health care: from needs assessment to risk management. In the Current Issue of LA NS5 / 2006. May be accessed online at [www.hivt.be/publicaties/linguistica\\_currentissue.htm](http://www.hivt.be/publicaties/linguistica_currentissue.htm)

Please answer the following survey questions in an email sent to [communications@healthcareinterpretationnetwork.ca](mailto:communications@healthcareinterpretationnetwork.ca)

You can also fill in this form and mail it to :

**Healthcare Interpretation Network**

**Attn. Communications Committee**

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## NEWSLETTER SURVEY

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Organisational affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Themes around which the Quarterly Newsletter might be organised.

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Suggestions on topics to be addressed in the 500 word articles.

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Suggestions on individuals who might be approached to write a 500 word article for the newsletter.

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Would you be prepared to submit an article for publication in the Newsletter?

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If yes, please provide a brief outline of the topic you would address.

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Thank you for taking the time to send us your thoughts.