

National Standards for Training Programs

An update from the NCIHC Standards, Training and Certification Committee

July 2009

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, ignition . . . lift off! The development of National Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs is underway!

In May 2009, the Standards, Training and Certification (STC) Committee of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care officially launched a national effort to develop standards for healthcare interpreter training programs. This is the next step in the Council's overall strategy to develop the healthcare interpreting profession, which started in the mid-1990s with a discussion of the interpreter role, followed by the development of the NCIHC National Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. This next set of standards will assure consistency and promote effectiveness in healthcare interpreter training. Specifically, these standards will:

- help curriculum developers know what to include in an interpreter training and which instructional methodologies are most appropriate and effective.
- help interpreters know what level of training they are receiving, and give them confidence that the training they are receiving is actually preparing them for the work they will be asked to do.
- help employers know what to expect from interpreters who have completed different levels training.
- inform the development of national certification.

So how will the Council go about developing these standards? First, we will try to learn what is known already about setting standards for training in other fields, about healthcare interpreter competencies (or, what should be taught), and about effective methods for training interpreters (or, how should it be taught). This will be done through a literature review, a review of existing healthcare interpreter training programs, an interpreter job analysis and a series of focus groups held around the country.

Then, we will form a Project Advisory Group, made up of people with collective expertise in training, in interpreting, in the science of learning, and in health care. These people will help the NCIHC STC committee draft an initial version of the standards, based on the initial research done in step one.

The draft standards will then be sent out for review – to you! Two national on-line surveys – one for interpreters and one for trainers – will be used to obtain feedback on the draft standards. The results from these surveys will guide the STC Committee and the Project Advisory Group in revising and finalizing the standards, which will then go out to interpreters, trainers, educational institutions, and employers via website, email and hard copy.

So, how are we doing so far? We have obtained **partial funding** for the project from The California Endowment and will be actively searching for additional financial support as well. We are also very close to **choosing a researcher** to do the initial literature review. We have conducted **one focus group** to date (at the NCIHC Annual Membership Meeting) to identify aspects of training other than content that should be addressed in standards. And finally, lines of communication are being set up with local interpreting associations and through the design of a brochure, in order to keep everyone in the loop as to how this 18-month project is advancing.

So keep a lookout for periodic updates on this project and for your chance to participate. Because you are the “national” in National Standards!