

Codes of Ethics

1. Confidentiality

Interpreters must treat all information learned during the interpretation as confidential, divulging nothing outside of the assignment or consultation without the full approval of the client and his/her provider.

2. Accuracy

Interpreters must transmit the message in a thorough and faithful manner, giving consideration to linguistic variations in both languages and conveying the tone and spirit of the original message. A word-for-word interpretation may not convey the intended idea. The interpreter must determine the relevant concept and say it in language that is readily understandable and culturally appropriate to the listener. In addition, the interpreter will make every effort to assure that the client has understood questions, instructions and other information transmitted by the service provider.

3. Completeness: Conveying Everything that is Said

Interpreters must interpret everything that is said by all people in the interaction, without omitting, adding, condensing or changing anything. If the content to be interpreted might be perceived as offensive, insensitive or otherwise harmful to the dignity and well-being of the patient, the interpreter should advise the county and/or other recipients of this before interpreting.

4. Conveying Cultural Frameworks

Interpreters shall explain cultural differences or practices to county and/or other recipients.

5. Non-Judgmental Attitude about the Content to be Interpreted

An interpreter's function is to facilitate communication. Interpreters are not responsible for what is said by anyone for whom they are interpreting. Even if the interpreter disagrees with what is said, thinks it is wrong, a lie or even immoral, the interpreter must suspend judgment, make no comment, and interpret everything accurately.

6. Client Self-determination

The interpreter may be asked by the client for his or her opinion. When this happens, the interpreter may provide or restate information that will assist the client in making his or her own decision. The interpreter will not influence the opinion of patients or clients by telling them what action to take.

7. Attitude Toward Clients

The interpreter should strive to develop a relationship of trust and respect at all times with the client by adopting a caring, attentive, yet discreet and impartial attitude toward the patient, toward his or her questions, concerns and needs.

The interpreter shall treat each patient equally with dignity and respect regardless of race, color, gender, religion, nationality, political persuasion or life-style choice.

8. Acceptance of Assignments

If level of competency or personal sentiments make it difficult to abide by any of the above conditions, the interpreter shall decline or withdraw from the assignment.

Interpreters should disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest that could affect their objectivity. For example, interpreters should refrain from providing services to

family members or close personal friends except in emergencies. In personal relationships, it is difficult to remain unbiased or non-judgmental.

In emergency situations, interpreters may be asked to do interpretations for which they are not qualified. The interpreter may consent only as long as all parties understand the limitations and no other interpreter is available.

9. Compensation

The fee agreed upon by the county or other recipient and the interpreter is the only compensation that the interpreter may accept. Interpreters will not accept additional money, considerations or favors for services reimbursed by the contracting agency. Interpreters will not use the agency's time, facilities, equipment or supplies for private gain, nor will they use their positions to secure privileges or exemptions.

10. Self-Evaluation

Interpreters shall represent their certification(s), training and experience accurately and completely.

11. Ethical Violations

Interpreters shall withdraw immediately from encounters that they perceive to be in violation of the Code of Ethics.

12. Professionalism

Interpreters shall be punctual, prepared and dressed in an appropriate manner. The trained interpreter is a professional who maintains professional behavior at all times while assisting clients and who seeks to further his or her knowledge and skills through continuing studies and training.

I agree to abide by this Code of Ethics,

(Name)

(Date)

(Signature)

-Source: This code is adapted from a combination of the Codes of Ethics from the Hospital Interpretation Program in Seattle, WA; Boston City Hospital in Boston, MA; and the American Medical Interpreters and Translators Association (AMITAS) in Stanford, CA and the Dane County Health Care Providers, Medical Interpreter Code of Ethics, Madison, WI.