



Minnesota Interpreter NEWSLETTER

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETERS IN HEALTHCARE

This past month, a number of new sources, including the Chicago Tribune and Reuters, reported on the benefits of *working with* professional interpreters, which includes the reduced in-patient stays in hospitals and costs savings.

*According to the article in the Chicago Tribune,
“In 2009, the average inpatient visit in a U.S. hospital lasted 4.6 days and
cost \$9,200, or \$2,000 a day.”*

The article also mentioned that an estimated 9% of Americans struggle to communicate effectively in English creating a language barrier. Because of this language barrier, it can be difficult for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) patients to understand doctor’s instructions and make informed decisions about their own health care., and for doctors to understand the patient’s needs and symptoms.

A study by the Journal of General Medicine published in April of 2012 found that *working with* an interpreter also reduced the rate of readmissions to the hospital for the same complaint.

This may not be new information to those of us in the interpreting field. The quality of patient care also improves when healthcare providers *work with* a professional interpreter. This means an interpreter that has received healthcare interpreting training, holds a credential in the healthcare interpreting field, or has graduated from an organization that is accredited to award a degree in interpreting.

As we continue to move forward as a profession, the interpreters will continue to get more recognition for the important services that are provided to LEP patients and healthcare providers as well as improving the working conditions for professional interpreters.

Source: “Interpreters may help shorten hospital stays” Chicago Tribune May 25, 2012.



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