

Certification of Health Care Interpreters

A primer, a status report and
considerations for national certification

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A full report on National Certification
of Health Care Interpreters in the
U.S. can be found at the website of
The California Endowment

*Available for free download at
www.calendow.org*

Terminology

- Assessment
- Certification
- Certificate of successful completion
- Licensure
- Accreditation

Certification as Part of Quality Assurance

1. Recruiting
2. Language screening
3. Training
4. Assessment
5. Monitoring
6. Continuing education

Judging a Certification's Credibility

- Is the certifying body credible?
- Is the certification instrument valid?
Does it test what it says it's testing?
- Is the certification instrument reliable?
Does it test consistently over forms, times and raters?
- Are the cut scores based on real data?
- Does the certification test to generally accepted and published standards of practice?

Who Benefits from Certification?

- Patients?
- Health care institutions?
- Interpreters?

Current Testing Instruments that have been piloted or are in use

- Connecting Worlds Partnership
- Language Line Services
- Massachusetts Medical Interpreter Association
- Oklahoma State University
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- University of Arizona, NCITRP
- Washington State DSHS

States Pursuing Certification/Qualification

- Washington
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Massachusetts
- North Carolina
- New York?
- Kentucky?

Why is there Interest in National Certification?

- Create a national dialogue
- Pooling resources
- Increased credibility for interpreters
- Legislators more likely to provide funding
- Easier to consumers to understand
- Avoids issues of state reciprocity.
- More likely to attract development funding

What are the Steps?

1. Educate interpreter community.
2. Secure initial funding.
3. Create a representative working group to provide leadership.
4. Build public support.
5. Choose a certifying body.
6. Choose professional test developers.
7. Choose what knowledge, attitudes and skills to test.

Steps to National Certification, con't

9. Pick a language pair to test.
10. Decide how to test.
11. Design a draft test.
12. Pilot test items (alpha test).
13. Analyze pilot and revise test.
14. Develop different versions of the test.
15. Set standards for grading.
16. Develop criteria for candidates.
17. Write a guide for candidates.

Steps to National Certification, con't

16. Develop training materials for test administrators and raters.
17. Choose and train test administrators/raters.
18. Pilot the test (beta testing).
19. Analyze the results and revise the test and all support materials.
20. Set cut score.
21. Implement the certification process.
22. Using the above as a guide, start over with a new language.

Additional Questions

- How can interpreters in less common languages be assessed?
- Could there be an alternate route to certification that does not include testing?
- Should certification be required?

How do we Start?

With dialogue.

