

Need To Know: This Is The Height Of Norovirus Season

Norovirus is very common and highly contagious. It can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. It is the leading cause of gastroenteritis in the U.S. In recent months there were outbreaks of norovirus caused by contaminated food. In addition, it can also be spread by improper hygiene and contact with contaminated surfaces.

The virus does especially well in the winter. Health officials reported recently that Minnesota is getting hit by a new strain of norovirus. This could mean more norovirus illnesses this winter in our state. See <http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-health-officials-warn-of-new-norovirus-strain/363266361/>

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the virus causes 19 - 21 million cases of acute gastroenteritis each year in the U.S., resulting in between 56000 and 71000 hospitalizations and 570 - 800 deaths, mostly among young children and the elderly.

Interpreters need to practice proper hand hygiene at hospitals and clinics during and after interpreting encounters. See <http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/> for more information about norovirus and how to prevent infection.

Legal Matter

See <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/ma-court-of-appeals/1712740.html> as a reminder that interpreters should not be allowed to be alone with patients. This case highlights that employer(s) could be liable for physical and emotional harm to patients committed by interpreter(s). Interpreter agencies may also find this ruling relevant and important.

2016 Board of Directors

The following individuals were duly elected at the December 10, 2015 Annual Membership Meeting to serve on the 2016 Board of Directors. Thank you for serving!

- Board Chair (Board Officer): Eleanor Ling
- Board Vice Chair (Board Officer): Xul Perez
- Secretary (Board Officer): Monica Hart
- Treasurer (Board Officer): Michele Reither
- Advocacy Committee Chair: Cathy Urbain
- Communication Committee Chair: Yvonne Araiza
- Membership Committee Chair: Nataliya Holen
- Training Committee Co-Chairs: Silvana Uchidiuno and Nella Barbieri-Myles
- Member-at-Large: Spencer Mohr

The new board shall have board orientation and board meeting in January 2016. The first 2016 membership meeting date/time and location will be announced after the January board meeting. Membership meeting schedule will be posted on the ISG website as well.

2015 Recap

As 2015 closes, we are pleased to highlight these ISG accomplishments:

- Conducted a 4-hour workshop “Ethics and Decision-Making” on May 30th. Eighty five interpreters received 3.5 contact hour continuing education credits.
- Conducted a 1.5 hour training seminar “HIPAA/HITECH Mega Rule: How They Affect Interpreters' Work and Conduct” on September 26th. Thirty one interpreters received 1.5 contact hour continuing education credits.
- The Minnesota Department of Health presented "Minnesota's Refugee and International Health Program: An Overview." as the keynote presentation at the December 10th ISG Annual Membership Meeting. The presentation included information of past and recent refugees settlement data and health issues.
- Awarded scholarships ranging from \$250 to \$500 to seven spoken language interpreters in three categories: academic training, non-academic training, and national certification testing.
- Awarded \$400 grant to partially fund the Ph.D research project of Ms. Rachel Herrings. Her research project will focus on the understanding of interpreter skills acquisition and effective interpreter training methodology.
- Per HF3172, provided information to MDH for the legislation HF2345/SF2177 introduced this year.
- Conducted meeting to educate interpreters on the tiered registry as recommended by MDH for spoken language healthcare interpreters on September 26th. The meeting also included a discussion on the proposed provisions in the 2015 Spoken Language Healthcare Interpreter Registry bill.
- Published electronic quarterly newsletters which were archived on the ISG website.
- Posted news articles and other updates relevant to the interpreting field on the ISG Facebook.

Volunteer Appreciation

We wish to thank all the ISG volunteers who served as board of directors and committee members. Their commitment and hard work resulted in the accomplishments as listed.

Financial Support

ISG would like to thank all members for their support of our training events, scholarships, and grant. We also appreciate the generous gifts from these donors:

- Minnesota Interpreter Institute
- Jean Peters and Jamie Peters, M.D.
- Javier Thayer, Ph.D.
- Anonymous

Donated Meeting Space

We thank our partners Allina Health, Children Hospitals and Clinics of MN, Hennepin County Medical Center, UCare and Pediatric Home Service for donating meeting space to conduct ISG training events, membership and board meetings.