

NCIHC Members Explore The New Frontier

By National Council on Interpreting in Health Care

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Members gather in Las Vegas, NV for the 3rd Annual NCIHC Membership Meeting

Members of the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare (NCIHC) gathered in the Southwest last week for a day and a half of work groups and networking with colleagues from across the nation.

The NCIHC is a multidisciplinary organization whose mission is to promote and enhance language access in health care. The NCIHC membership is composed of leaders from around the country who work as medical interpreters, interpreter service coordinators and trainers, clinicians, policymakers, advocates and researchers. Once a year, members gather to participate in work groups that impact the work of the Council.

The NCIHC leadership consists of a 16-member volunteer Board made up of two Co-chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and the two Co-chairs of each of its six committees that support the organizational goals and mission, along with an advisory group of individuals who provide expert insight and support. The annual membership meeting is part of the Council's ongoing effort to engage with its members in an inclusive and transparent manner.

This year, the Council's Standards, Training and Certification Committee held the first in a series of focus groups aimed at identifying aspects of training programs that should be addressed in the forthcoming National Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs. The Organizational Development Committee discussed the role of the NCIHC in the health care arena as development toward a strategic plan currently underway. Members also met with the Outreach Committee to brainstorm potential PR initiatives that support language access to health care for limited English proficient (LEP) patients. Other members met with the Policy & Research Committee to give feedback on the NCIHC Annotated Bibliography (<http://biblio.ncihc.org>) and the policy and research toolkits currently under development.

In addition to the work groups, Amy Wilson-Stronks, a Joint Commission Project Director in the Division of Standards and Survey Methods, and the Principal Investigator of the Hospitals, Language, and Culture study, engaged participants in an open dialogue about the feasibility of the draft standards to promote effective communication and cultural competence. Representatives of The National Coalition for Healthcare Interpreter Certification (NCC) were also present and surveyed NCIHC members on the proposed elements of a single national certification process for languages of limited diffusion.

"Many of us attend meetings, workshop and educational sessions of this kind. But, they are not usually as interactive and engaging as what we experienced at this NCIHC meeting over the past two days. The meeting sessions were truly meant to understand the views and recommendations of the membership in order to build a more supportive and effective NCIHC," wrote attendee Stergios Roussos, PhD, MPH, a Community Scientist from Merced, California.

The NCIHC Membership Committee is currently at work on a meeting report that will be available on the NCIHC website later this summer. For more information about this and other NCIHC efforts, visit <http://www.ncihc.org>.

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