

## Medical Interpretation: Spanish Certificate

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*“The United States is known for the quality of its health care, but the quality of care is useless if physicians are unable to connect with their patients to provide those services. Culturally and linguistically competent health care is especially important for the Latino community as it enables health care providers to better diagnose and treat patients with Latino heritage.”*

*- LULAC.org<sup>1</sup>*

Effective communication between health care providers and their patients is key to successfully serving Nevada’s Spanish-speaking families, work force, and tourists. Certified Medical Interpreters break down language and cultural barriers to ensure accurate, timely, effective diagnosis and medical treatment. Medical interpreters also play a key role in patient education; in addition to communicating important information during medical visits, they may also be asked to translate written materials including brochures, web content, and care instructions. Medical interpreters support administrative functions by translating patient forms or medical records from Spanish to English or English to Spanish.

Nevada hospitals and medical offices increasingly recognize the value of hiring Certified Medical Interpreters. UNLV offers the only in-person medical interpretation certificate in Southern Nevada that fulfills the requirements to sit for the national certification exams. This national designation assures employers that interpreters not only understand the linguistic aspects of the job, but also the cultural differences that may impact doctor-patient relationships. Patient privacy and ethical boundaries are essential elements of the UNLV curriculum.



*7.4% of Clark County households are linguistically isolated, meaning there is no one in the household over 14 proficient in English. Linguistically isolated households may have difficulty accessing both routine and emergency medical services.*

*Medical interpreters can bridge both language and cultural differences between patients, families, and medical professionals.<sup>2</sup> Data shows health outcomes in America for Latino populations lag their white counterparts. One recommended solution from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the addition of medical interpreters to health care teams at hospitals and doctor’s offices. Better two-way communication leads to better medical care.*

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 Nevada anticipates a 42 percent increase in the number of interpretation and translation jobs over 10 years.<sup>3</sup> The median wage for interpreters in NV was \$44,303 in 2017.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.healthysouthernnevada.org/index.php?module=indicators&controller=index&action=view&indicatorId=297&localeId=1800>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www1.salary.com/NV/Las-Vegas/Medical-Interpreter-salary.html>

## Earn a Medical Interpretation: Spanish Certificate

UNLV's Medical Interpretation: Spanish Certificate program prepares bilingual speakers to work as a medical interpreter in a hospital, doctor's office, social service agency, or as a contractor. Emphasis is placed on understanding the problems and complexities of interpretation, the roles and responsibilities of a medical interpreter, use of pertinent medical terminology and its context, and the development of interpretation skills. Certificate candidates must successfully complete five courses.

- Introduction to Medical Interpreting
- Medical Terminology & Specialties I
- Medical Terminology & Specialties II
- Medical Consecutive Interpreting
- Medical Simultaneous Interpreting & Sight Translation

## Both the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters and the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreting

require certification applicants to be a minimum of 18 years of age, have a minimum high school diploma or GED, earn a certificate of completion from a medical interpreter training course of at least 40 hours (fulfilled by this program), and be orally proficient in both English and the target language (Spanish). Once all prerequisites are met, candidates first take a written exam and then an oral exam.



*What is the difference between interpretation and translation? Interpreters work orally, converting one spoken language to another. They may be asked to listen and speak at the same time (simultaneous) or listen to a complete statement before interpreting (consecutive). Translators work with written materials. A good translator will be able to convert a document into the target language while retaining both meaning and style.*

## Meet the Instructors

**Alvaro Vergara-Mery, PhD, CMI** is a Certified Medical Interpreter and licensed trainer in the Cultural and Linguistic Services Department at University Medical Center (UMC) in Las Vegas. He is in charge of interpreter education and training, language proficiency, cultural competence, translation and curriculum design. He has extensive experience as a practicing medical interpreter in a Level I Trauma center that serves a large population of Spanish-speaking patients and he is nationally recognized for his advanced level workshops for medical interpreters. Vergara-Mery is a cultural and language access consultant and has received the California Healthcare Interpreters Association's 2016 Trainer of the Year Award. He is adjunct faculty at UNLV School of Medicine.

**David Loaiza-Funk, MHS, CMI/CHI, CLSSBB** serves as the Chair of the Diversity Committee for ACHE-NV Chapter as well as UMC. David has worked with UMC for 5 years leading the Cultural and Linguistic Services Department ensuring quality of services in communications expanding projects of language proficiency, cultural competency and interpreting training. David has a master's degree in health care administration as well as dual certification in medical/health care interpreting and a black belt in Lean Six Sigma for quality improvement. Loaiza-Funk is currently starting the Nevada Caucus through the National Association of Latino Healthcare Executives.

## Enroll in an upcoming session

The first cohort of medical interpreters will take two courses in fall 2017 and complete the remaining three course requirements in spring 2018. View course descriptions and schedules online at [continuingeducation.unlv.edu/certificate-programs](http://continuingeducation.unlv.edu/certificate-programs). Attend a free information session or contact us with your questions about becoming a professional medical interpreter.

## Contact Us

We are happy to answer your questions about any of our programs. Reach UNLV Continuing Education by phone at **702-895-3394** or via email at [continuing.education@unlv.edu](mailto:continuing.education@unlv.edu).

