

AMITAS Code of Ethics for Medical Interpreters and Translators

A medical interpreter/translator is a specially trained professional who has proficient knowledge and skills in a primary language or languages and employs that training in a medical or health related setting in order to make possible communication among parties using different languages.

The skills of a medical interpreter/translator include cultural sensitivity and awareness and respect to all parties involved, as well as mastery of medical and colloquial terminology, which make possible conditions of mutual trust and accurate communication leading to effective provision of medical/health services.

I. The Interpreter/Translator when interpreting/translating:

1. Shall perform his/her work accurately, completely, and clearly with the greatest possible fidelity to the spirit and letter of the original communication.
2. Shall consider all information learned and/or transmitted during the performance of interpretation/translation as strictly confidential divulging no part of it unless with the full approval of the patient and his/her physician.
3. Shall strive to enhance the communication process among all parties by providing information and guidance regarding the communication needs involved in the interaction.
4. Shall Interpret/Translate everything, but shall inform the health professional if the content to be translated might be perceived as offensive, insensitive, or otherwise harmful to the dignity and welt being of the patient.
5. Shall not accept any assignment for which he/she is not adequately qualified, either in language skill or understanding of the subject matter, unless limitations are understood by the patient and health provider and no other more appropriate source of interpretation is available.
6. Shall not accept any assignment in situations where close personal or professional ties may affect impartiality, unless an emergency renders the service necessary.

II. The Interpreter/Translator when working with the patient

1. Shall strive to develop a relationship of trust and respect at all times with the patient by adhering to the points delineated in Section I and by practicing the following:
 - a. adopts a caring, attentive, yet discreet and impartial attitude toward the patient, toward his/her questions, concerns, and needs
 - b. makes every effort to understand and communicate to others the context (social, cultural) in which the patient is operating, particularly as it may affect the patient's medical needs and status
 - c. understands and assures that the principle of informed consent is implemented through

complete translation of all necessary written and/or verbal information in order that the patient be able to assert the right of free choice to the greatest extent possible

d. makes every effort to assure that the patient has understood questions, instructions, and other information transmitted by the health provider.

2. Shall refrain from fulfilling roles and functions that exceed those of an interpreter/translator, so as to give the patient a reliable and clear understanding of what service the interpreter/translator is providing.

III. The Interpreter/Translator when interacting with the Health Provider

1. Shall develop a relationship of trust and respect at all times with the health provider by adhering to the points delineated in Section I and practicing the following:

- demonstrates empathy and a spirit of cooperation toward the provider's role
- possesses an impartial attitude toward the health provider
- makes every effort to assure the clear communication of the health provider's information needs.

2. Shall consider it a responsibility to be well informed with respect to the cultural/social realities of the patient and educate those who due to lack of cultural awareness may be led to misunderstand or enter into conflict with those realities.

3. Shall know competency limitations, therefore, refrain from fulfilling any role, function, or service that does not pertain to the position of medical interpreter/translator as defined above.

IV. The Interpreter/Translator shall also:

1. be punctual, patient, and possess evenness of temper

2. have unquestionable integrity

3. pursue continuous education

4. maintain contacts with other interpreters/translators participating in meetings, forums, and facilitating the reciprocal flow of professional information and support

5. not permit others to perform professional services or to hold themselves as competent beyond their training, level of experience, and competence

6. assign publication credit to those who have contributed to a publication in proportion to their contributions

7. store and dispose confidential records in ways that keep the information confidential

8. promote conditions that encourage respect for the diversify of cultures which constitute our society

9. strive to ensure that all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities required for health care

10. support the formulation, development, enactment, and implementation of policies of concern to the profession.