



Welcome to Deaf Services Commission of Iowa



"Equal Communication, Education, and Access"

# SIGN of the TIMES

September 2006

## COMMISSIONER'S UPDATES



### David Jones, Vice Chairperson

David Jones has been on the commission since 2005. As Director of Interpretation Services at Mercy

Medical Center the program has grown to include 13 languages, a Deaf patient advocate, interpreter training and cultural competency advocacy.

I have always been interested in languages and a few years ago took a renewed interest in access for the Deaf community. I was inspired by my great grandfather who was profoundly deaf and my cousin who moves forward with her cochlear implant (CI). But I wondered who should be interpreting? It really depends on where you are. If you are buying lunch, maybe your interpreter is your bilingual son. If you are making an appointment with your mechanic maybe your interpreter is your sister-in-law. What about when you arrive at the doctor's office for an appointment about your high blood pressure?

Your healthcare should include a bilingual healthcare provider or an interpreter who is qualified in your language/culture and that of the medical provider. This issue is so important that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires qualified for Sign language interpreters Deaf patients, and the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards from the U.S. Office of Minority Health require that qualified spoken language interpreters are present for patients who speak limited English in facilities that accept federal funds.

So who is a qualified interpreter for healthcare? Your son or friend are all there to support you and help you stay healthy, but not to interpret for you and your healthcare provider. This important responsibility should be taken on by someone who is trained and qualified for your language/culture and that of the medical provider.

Most healthcare systems provide language services. Services may include written information, bilingual healthcare providers, qualified staff and contract interpreters, equipment and telephone and video interpretation. Not all healthcare systems are the same however, and if you are asked to bring a friend or relative to interpret or if your healthcare provider asks you to write back and forth or lip-read instead of providing a qualified interpreter, you should inform the healthcare provider in writing that you want a qualified interpreter. If the healthcare provider does not obtain a qualified interpreter or offer appropriate language services you have many locations that can advocate with you. First you may contact Deaf Services Commission of Iowa, or the U.S. Department of Justice or the Office of Civil Rights. Remember a qualified interpreter is also an unbiased individual, working to ensure you and the healthcare provider achieve great communication. Your health depends on it.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

- 9/9: Deaf Adventureland Day, Des Moines
- 9/9: ASL Medical Vocabulary Class, "Another Look at Cardiology", Des Moines
- 9/12: Mercy Education Series, "The Heart Truth", Des Moines
- 9/23: 21st Annual Deaf Awareness Walk-a-Thon at DMACC Ankeny Campus by Lake

### **ICE—In Case of Emergency on Cell Phones**

If you have an emergency, paramedics tend to look for cell phones to find ICE in the address book to contact next of kin or a family member to get more medical history information. This will help save your life! For more information: go to this website:

[http://www.usatoday.com/tech/wireless/phones/2005-08-15-ice-cell-phone\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/tech/wireless/phones/2005-08-15-ice-cell-phone_x.htm)

Visit the DSCI website: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/ds/index.html>

Questions or Comments?

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