

## INTERPRETER SERVICES

The Health Care Interpreter Service (HICS) provides a 24 hour, Area multilingual and sign interpreter service to patients in SWSAHS. An Area translation service is also provided by the Health Translations Unit (HTU).

Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese and Assyrian are the largest language groups for which services are provided by the HICS.

The number of interpreter occasions of service that are delivered each year in SWSAHS, continue to grow. This trend is expected to continue in accordance with the population growth forecasts to 2011.

### Current Services

The HICS provides services across all SWSAHS. Services are also provided to a limited number of non-government agencies. Core functions of the Service include the provision of direct interpreting and translation services, the development and dissemination of multi-lingual communication aids and language resources and planning and policy development.

The HICS has Interpreter bases at Fairfield, Liverpool and Bankstown Hospitals. The management and administration of the HICS is centralised at Liverpool Hospital. Staffing includes the Service Manager, Business Manager, Sessional Coordinator/Staff Development Officer, Health Translation Unit Coordinator, Booking Clerks, Administration Officers and Interpreters including staff interpreters and contractors.

Currently, the HICS has two main priorities; firstly, the Service aims to develop a model of service delivery that can meet increased demand, whilst maintaining quality standards. In particular, HICS has been active in introducing technology to improve access to the Service. With the implementation of video-interpreting, access to interpreters will be significantly improved for Camden, Bowral and Campbelltown Hospitals. At the same time, a number of service agreements have been developed with the health providers that are major users of interpreting services. These service agreements enable the Service to meet the increased demand resulting from the expansion of a particular service or a particular government initiative, eg Families First.

Secondly, the HCIS has identified that the SWSAHS Health Translation Unit has strong potential for growth and further development. In particular, consultations have been undertaken with a range of stakeholders, which have identified in-principle support for the provision of translation services to all Area Health Services. A proposal is currently being developed in line with the outcomes of these consultations.

### Teaching and Research

The provision of education and training to service providers in interpreter usage is a key component of the HICS. In addition, the HICS provides trainers for statewide and local professional development of interpreters from new and emerging communities.

Research is also an integral function of the HICS. The HICS is currently involved in, and provides funding for, research into the impact of interpreter use on patient outcomes in hospital emergency departments in SWSAHS. This research project is a collaboration between eight Area Health Services, the NSW Department of Health and the University of NSW, and has potential international significance.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Interpreter services will expand to reflect the clinical services development across the Area.
- A new interpreter service will be established at Campbelltown.