Fast, Easy Translating Ensures Better Nurse-Patient Communication

By Jane Ammeson
Southwest Washington Medical Center is discovering that delivering quality care to limited English proficiency patients now is much easier with InDemand Interpreting. The system allows instant access to interpreters with just one mouse click.

“The use of InDemand eliminates the stress of scheduling interpreters and having appointments delayed or even canceled,” says Lynda D. Benak, RN, MSN, manager, Clinical Risk Management, Patient Relations and Interpreting Services at Southwest Washington Medical Center. “Whenever the need arises, you simply roll the device, mounted on a sturdy rolling cart, into a patient room and begin.”

According to Systematech, manufacturers of InDemand, the need for translating services, now mandated by law, is expected to increase 38% from 2006 to 2016. To meet the burgeoning demands, Systematech has three call centers throughout Washington that are available 24/7. Once InDemand is set up, language choices appear on screen.

“We currently support Spanish, Russian, American Sign Language and Vietnamese,” says Andrew Drake, chief operating officer at Systematech, about the languages available on system. “This makes up about 90% of the needs for our current customers. We are adding Somali in February and Cantonese in March.”

After selecting a language (choosing gender also is an option), an interpreter appears on the screen, usually within a few seconds but never longer than 30 seconds.

“They will ask for the medical record number, the encounter number, or however your account decides to identify the calls, and you begin your interpreting session,” Benak says. “Most interpreting encounters are between nine and 12 minutes. When InDemand is not used for a patient session, our next choice of service would be telephonic. Our last choice is an onsite interpreter, unless the patient or physician specifically requests it.”

She says nurses and patients appreciate the system’s motto: “Your world, your words, 30 seconds.”

“When we piloted the project, the response from patients and staff was overwhelmingly positive.”

Jane Ammeson is a freelance writer.
Read more of this story at Nurse.com/article/translating.

DNP Program Offers Convenience for Working Nurses

Master’s-prepared RNs have another opportunity to advance their degrees through a new DNP program at Samuel Merritt University in Oakland, Calif.

The 36-credit online program started at the Oakland-based school in January to accommodate students who want to keep working in their practice settings while studying for their DNP, according to a news release. More advanced practice nursing jobs are requiring doctoral degrees, with the number of students enrolled in DNP programs increasing from 3,415 in 2008 to 5,165 in 2009, the news release stated.

“The DNP is aligned with our mission and goals,” said Cecily Cosby, RN, PhD, professor and DNP director for SMU. “It coincides with the urgent need for healthcare reform and the Institute of Medicine’s recommendation to maximally utilize the training and skills of nurses. It will allow us to better serve the community with nurses prepared for the challenges ahead.”

For more information, visit Samuelmerritt.edu.

CHOC Children’s RNs Awarded for Flow Teamwork

CHOC Children’s Hospital in Orange, Calf., was honored by The California Team Excellence Awards with the 2010 Bronze Award for the exemplary outcomes of its Patient Flow Improvement Team. The CTEA was established to encourage the formation of work teams.

The team was recognized for its performance improvement efforts and statistically significant results. Members of the team presented to judges at the CTEA competition in October. CHOC earned a 84.4 out of 126 possible points. The team included the following nurses: Cheryl Missildine, RN, MSN, NEA-BC; Jill Fargo, RN, MSN, FNP, NEA-BC; Ruth Slater, RN, ADN; Susan Feidner, RN, BSN; Karen Pugh, RNC, MSN; Sheila Paris, RN, ADN; Norah Takaoka, RN, BS, CPN; BJ Thompson, RN, ADN; Julie Vaupel-Phillips, RN, MHA, CCRN; and Mike Vicioso, RN, MSN, CCRN, CPEN.