

CI to offer Certificate in Spanish Interpreting in Healthcare beginning fall 2016

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West said the two St. John's hospitals now offer both audio and video interpreter services in hundreds of different languages 24/7 through a remote interpreting service, but believes it will be more effective to have medical interpreters at the bedside when needed.

Jiménez-Jiménez said the course will be available to all students, including CI Extended University students and the community.

Students must successfully complete the five required courses with an overall average grade of B minus or better. Students who complete the course of study and earn a certificate from CI will be eligible to take any of the nationally recognized certification exams by the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters, or by the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters.

Aside from becoming an increasingly globalized world with many non-English speakers in the U.S., Jiménez-Jiménez said the increased need for health care interpretation may also be the result of the Affordable Care Act, giving more people from a variety of cultures access to healthcare, not all of them English speakers.

Healthcare interpreters must also be familiar with cultural norms as communication will be with people with different backgrounds and values.

"In some rural communities, for example, they may use herbal medicines or other resources that modern medicine doesn't consider," said Jiménez-Jiménez. "Some people believe that someone can cast an evil eye on them and it's affecting their health. The interpreter may have to explain the cultural concept to the doctor."

CI 2016 graduate Gabriel Guillén, who works as a registered nurse at St. John's, also had a role in getting the word out about the need for medical interpreters. On May 21, Guillén was awarded a Masters in Business Administration to join his 2011 degree in Nursing.

Guillén realized there was an opportunity for medical interpreters while working at St. John's in Oxnard as a Community Health Supervisor.

Jiménez-Jiménez said he hopes to add a service learning component to the certificate, which means interpreters will be able to perfect their craft while working with actual patients in a clinical environment.