

Medical Interpretation at SJB

What is interpretation?

Interpretation refers to *orally* conveying a message from one language to another, without changing and without omitting anything from that message. It is distinct from **translation**, which has to do only with *written* communication.

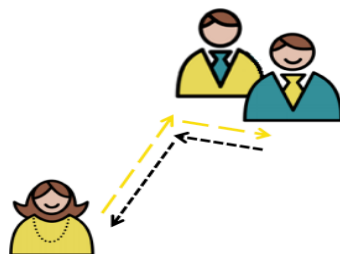
How does interpretation work at SJB?

At San Juan Bosco clinic, most patients you will encounter prefer to conduct their medical visits in Spanish. Therefore, at least one fluent Spanish speaker will be in each room on clinic nights to serve as an interpreter. Students who serve as interpreters have completed training on best practices in medical interpretation, and have been evaluated for their Spanish language skills. Still, the entire medical team of students can benefit from understanding some of the basic guidelines for communicating with patients via an interpreter.

Tips for Working with an Interpreter in a Medical Setting

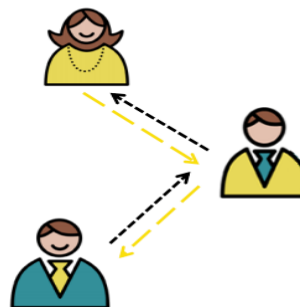
- Always speak to the patient directly, in the first person, as you would in any other medical encounter (i.e. “How long have you had the pain?” and not “Ask her how long she has had the pain.”).
- Speak in short, clear sentences, and avoid medical jargon whenever possible
- Pause frequently as you speak to give the interpreter time to interpret
- Look at the patient when you are speaking and not at the interpreter
- Minimize side conversations that do not include the patient
- Be aware that although a patient may prefer to speak in Spanish in a medical setting, this does not mean that the patient does not possess a good command of the English language. **Assume that every patient speaks English, and do not say anything in English in front of the patient that you would not want the patient to hear.**
- Family members should never be relied upon to interpret for a patient except in cases of emergency.

Interpreter next to and slightly behind the patient



Positioning in a professional interpretation setting

Interpreter between the provider and the patient



Positioning at SJB as interpreter is part of care team