



## North Carolina Professional Interpreter Association Committed to Quality Communication in Health and Human Services

### **GREETINGS TO ALL NCPIA MEMBERS!**

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By Paul A. Ayivon, Chairperson, NCPIA

Happy New Year NCPIA members! On behalf of the Executive Bureau I wish everyone peace, happiness, and great success in everything you undertake.

On December 15th, 2006 the NCPIA Executive Bureau (EB) met with the Center for New North Carolinians (CNNC) management staff to lay out a plan for the growth and development of the association and local chapters. The key areas we will focus on are as follows:

**Status:** CNNC will hire a consultant to help NCPIA in the amendment of its Bylaws and gear them towards non-profit status (501(c) 3 status). A contact has been made, and the bylaws revision committee will meet in the near future.

**Communication:** Plans have been made to improve communication within

the association and with other similar organizations. A website will be set up for NCPIA and a group email for all members as well as a regular quarterly publication of the NCPIA newsletter. Also members of the EB will be in charge of contact and on-going relationships with specific local chapters.

**Training:** CNNC will organize leadership trainings for the Executive Bureau and any interested members from local chapters.

**Committees:** There is an urgent need to establish *ad hoc* and permanent committees to address some issues regarding: Advocacy, Interpreter Certification, Professional Development, Finance, and Public Relations. Please contact Paul Ayivon at [payivon@bww.com](mailto:payivon@bww.com) if you are interested in being active on any of these committees.

As you can see, there is a lot we have to do for our growth and our credibility. Your involvement is critical; your opinions and suggestions are highly valuable. Let us hear from you.

### **Introducing Your 2007 Executive Bureau**

#### **Chairperson: Paul Ayivon**

Mr. Paul A. Ayivon is a native of Togo, West Africa. He has a Master's degree from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana where he also taught Public Speaking. In 1999 Paul won a National Award from *The United States Achievement Academy* for Leadership and Academic Excellence. Paul is a trained interpreter and conducts translation trainings. He speaks French, Spanish, and a variety of West African languages. He loves to cook.

#### **Vice Chairperson: Grace Cuebas Colon**

Grace Cuebas Colon, vice chair of NCPIA, was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico. Grace came to the United States to go to college in Iowa. She moved to North Carolina in September 2002. Grace enrolled in the Americorps ACCESS program in 2005 and is currently serving her second year at the Center for

New North Carolinians at the Immigrant Health Access Hotline. She recently completed a CNA program from GTCC and is working to complete her certification. She has future hopes to complete a Moses Cone Radiology Program, Doula certification and a Lamaze certification. She is a member of an HIV committee known as H.I.V.S (Hispanos Interesados en una Vida Saludable) where she is a HIV lay health advisor that serves the Hispanic community as well as other communities.

#### **Secretary: Milagros Amaro**

Milagros Amaro, of Puerto Rican descent, was born and raised in the Bronx, NYC.

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## Meet the New Executive Bureau!

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Milagros has 20 years of occupational interpreting experience, mostly assisting human resources departments. She currently works at the Guilford County Public Health Department as the multilingual services coordinator. She is the chairperson for the Today's Woman advisory board in Winston-Salem, and is the facilitator of HIVS (Hispanos Interesados En Una Vida Saludable). In her free time, she enjoys salsa dancing, nature walks, museums, and reading.

**Vice Secretary: Evelyn Rodriguez**

Evelyn Rodriguez, born in Hollywood, Florida to Puerto Rican parents has three brothers and two sisters. She has been married for 17 years and has a 14 year old daughter named Kristyn. Evelyn graduated from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (A&T) with a degree in Liberal Studies and a minor in Special Education. Currently, she is writing her masters in Rehabilitation Counseling at A&T. She has been working at the Guilford County Health Department for 2 years as the Guilford County Child Health Community Interpreter.

**Treasurer: Susan Chilcott**

Susan has lived in Greensboro since 1978. She was employed as a foster care social worker for 20 years.

Currently, she works at the Center for New North Carolinians (CNNC) as the interpreter bank coordinator. Since NCPIA was an initiative of the CNNC it was logical for the treasurer to be located at the Center. As NCPIA moves towards independence this year, Susan will transfer responsibilities to the new treasurer.

**Vice Treasurer: Annia Colon**

Originally from Santurce, Puerto Rico, Annia came to the United States in 1994 to go to college at Iowa State University. She moved to Greensboro in 1998. For the last 7 years, Annia has worked in the Health and Human Services field. Currently, she works at Family Services of the Piedmont as the Hispanic Outreach Home Visitor, assisting Hispanic families for a program called Healthy Start. Also, she has been an interpreter in the Health and Human Setting for the last 6 years. She is involved in several committees such as H.I.V.S. and the Infant Mortality Coalition that assist and educate the Hispanic community in Guilford County.

**Information Commissioner: Stephen R Butler**

Born and raised in the Boston area, Steve has nearly 30 years' experience living and working in

about fifteen Latin American countries; he says he is "gringo de nacimiento y latino de corazon." He now has one year's experience as a trained interpreter working with various DSS and Medical Service providers and clients on a contract basis. Also working full time for the Pepsi Bottling Group, he uses his limited spare time to fish, play golf and enjoy his three grandchildren. Steve wants to help NCPIA be the leading resource for trained interpreters to the agencies and organizations who need interpreter services.

**Information Commissioner: Jacqueline Corbin Adams**

Jacqueline has 7 years experience as an interpreter, mostly assisting in public health and human relations. She was born and raised in Colon, Republic of Panama. Currently, she works at Guilford Child Health Bilingual Patient services. She is a member of HIVS (Hispanis Interesados En Una Vida Saludable). Jacqueline also participates in the YWCA Doula teen program and in outreach health fairs. In her free time, she enjoys music, dancing, relaxing, and watching movies, especially comedies.

### A Message from your 2007 Executive Bureau

The greatness of NCPIA starts with its members. It is and will be the result of the quality of service; the professionalism and the respect with which we treat our job as interpreters; our responsibility as advocates; and above all our mission as unifiers of nations. Without communication nothing can happen, so let us be proud and know that the work we do is not only noteworthy but essential for the well being of our communities. A proverb from Ghana states: "The ruins of a nation begin in the

homes of its people". Let us work together to avoid our own ruin. Our purpose is to upgrade the understanding and the consideration that people have for our profession. To reach that goal we need to work consistently, knowing that in the end our labor will yield results all of us will be proud of. This will give us more leverage to build relationships with legislators and the state government to demonstrate the difference our professional work makes throughout North Carolina.

NCPIA executive bureau needs your enthusiasm, commitment, and professionalism to give our organization the recognition and respect it deserves. Therefore I am inviting you to continue striving for greatness, and to be active members because only together we can make a difference.

## ***The Challenging Aspects of Ethical Decisions***

By Arelys Chevalier, MSSW, LCSW

Several years ago, during a training of trainers, a fellow participant told a story that enhanced my understanding of the Interpreters' Code of Ethics and the interpreter's underlying responsibility to "do no harm".

An emergency hysterectomy had been scheduled for a young Mexican woman, who had been experiencing excessive vaginal bleeding. She was an undocumented immigrant and had no health insurance nor any money to pay for the operation.

During the preparation for the surgery, the anesthesiologist exclaimed in front of the interpreter, the patient, and the rest of the health care professionals: "I wish these people would all swim back to their country". The interpreter chose not to interpret the derogatory remark.

Whenever I use this story in Level II interpreter training, all participants typically agree with the origi-

nal interpreters decision: interpreting the anesthesiologist's remark may have caused emotional trauma for the patient whom we assumed would have chosen to go through with the surgery given her health, immigration status and limited financial resources. On the other hand, the woman may have chosen to postpone the surgery and, as a result, risk her life, possibly bleeding to death before another surgery could be re-scheduled with a different anesthesiologist.

However, one participant, a bilingual operating room (OR) nurse, strongly disagreed with the opinion of the group. She held firm to her conviction that this decision violated the ethic of patient autonomy, and therefore informed consent. In her opinion, the patient had a right to decide what would be the course of action after the anesthesiologist blatantly expressed negative feelings toward her.

We argued that not telling the patient made it possible for her to

get a medical procedure which she direly needed, and postponing the surgery may have put her life at risk. The OR nurse said that without the knowledge of the physician's feelings, the patient was denied the opportunity to choose. She said that the other health care professionals in the room should have stopped proceedings until the patient made a decision, because the remark violated the Medical Code of Ethics, specifically the ethic of patient autonomy.

Technically, this was also a violation of the Interpreter's Code of Ethics in relation to patient autonomy. The interpreter has an obligation to interpret all statements. However, the interpreter, during this critical moment, had to make a quick decision. She was concerned for the patient's life.

How critical is it to interpret this statement? As an interpreter, how do you think you would have handled this situation?

## ***VIC Versus WIC: The Importance of Interpreter Training***

By H'Tuyet Rahlan, CNNC Asian Lay Health Advisor

It is important that all interpreters are trained professionally. Recently I interpreted a conversation between a Montagnard father and a teacher that reinforced this conviction.

The conversation concerned the academic progress of the father's child. The teacher asked questions about the child's home life: did they have food; was there heat and air conditioning; did the children have enough clothes. She explained to him that conditions in the home impact a student's performance academically.

They discussed some of the conditions of the apartment that the

family had lived in for three years. For example, the apartment never had heat or air conditioning; the furnace had always been broken. Coming from a refugee camp in Cambodia to the United States, the man explained that his apartment was a blessing compared to the conditions in the refugee camp. He did not feel he should complain. Also, eight other apartments had the same conditions. By the end of the conversation, he did not want to express any disagreement, especially if eight other people were not willing to say anything. He did not want to appear, in his words: a bad guy or a troublemaker.

The father was very thankful for the concern and help the teacher

offered. He asked her if she could help him with other things such as getting assistance with food. The teacher asked if he had WIC assistance.

He nodded his head excitedly and explained that every time he went to the grocery store he showed the card and got all sorts of things on discount.

He mentioned how he was able to buy beer with the card. This comment struck me as odd and so I asked to pause the conversation and asked him to show me the card. He pulled out a Harris Teeter VIC card. I immediately knew what had been  
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**(“Vic Versus Wic” continued from page 3)**

misunderstood: typically, the letters W and V are difficult sounds to pronounce for Asians just beginning to learn English.

The teacher showed him an example of a WIC card and told him where to go register for these services. The father was amazed at how the teacher was willing to fight for him and his family, and was impressed at how much it seemed like systems in the United States care.

The teacher thanked me for my help in managing the flow of communication and also expressed her appreciation for services interpreters provide.

I am thankful for the Center for New North Carolinian’s (CNNC) interpreter bank. The professional training that I received equipped me to sense miscommunication between parties. I was able to intervene and help manage the flow of communication because of this training. When I think about this interpretation, I feel proud to be an interpreter.

**REMINDER: 2007 dues for NCPIA membership are due. Make \$10 check payable to UNCG-CNNC and mail to Attention Susan Chilcott 413 S. Edgeworth St. Greensboro, NC 27401**

**INTERPRETER RESOURCES:  
Check out [www.jergasdehablahispana.org](http://www.jergasdehablahispana.org) for Spanish slang terms**