



Code of Ethics for Medical Interpreters

(Established in 1987 and revised in 2006)

The IMIA was the first organization to author an ethical code of conduct specifically for medical interpreters. Multiple codes of ethics have since followed. A code of ethics is necessary for medical interpreters to maintain standards for the individuals within that profession to adhere to. It brings about accountability, responsibility and trust to the individuals that the profession serves.

1. Interpreters will maintain confidentiality of all assignment-related information.
2. Interpreters will select the language and mode of interpretation that most accurately conveys the content and spirit of the messages of their clients.
3. Interpreters will refrain from accepting assignments beyond their professional skills, language fluency, or level of training.
4. Interpreters will refrain from accepting an assignment when family or close personal relationships affect impartiality.
5. Interpreters will not interject personal opinions or counsel patients.
6. Interpreters will not engage in interpretations that relate to issues outside the provision of health care services unless qualified to do so.
7. Interpreters will engage in patient advocacy and in the intercultural mediation role of explaining cultural differences/practices to health care providers and patients only when appropriate and necessary for communication purposes, using professional judgment.
8. Interpreters will use skillful unobtrusive interventions so as not to interfere with the flow of communication in a triadic medical setting.
9. Interpreters will keep abreast of their evolving languages and medical terminology.
10. Interpreters will participate in continuing education programs as available.
11. Interpreters will seek to maintain ties with relevant professional organizations in order to be up-to-date with the latest professional standards and protocols.
12. Interpreters will refrain from using their position to gain favors from clients.

The IMIA was the first organization to author an ethical code of conduct specifically for medical interpreters. IMIA members uphold high standards of professionalism and ethical conduct for interpreters. At the core of this code of conduct are the twelve tenets above. These tenets are to be viewed holistically and as a guide to professional behavior. Members who do not adhere to the standards of practice or the code of ethics can be terminated.

